



# ALBERTA **NAWMP** PARTNERSHIP

**2024-2025 PROGRESS REVIEW**  
APRIL 2024 TO MARCH 2025



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**CITATION:**

*Alberta NAWMP Partnership. 2025. Alberta NAWMP Partnership 2024-2025 Progress Review: April 2024 to March 2025. Ducks Unlimited Canada, Edmonton, AB. Alberta NAWMP-076.*

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DUC

## PREFACE: AGRICULTURE & MUNICIPALITIES IN WETLAND CONSERVATION

Although wetlands provide multiple benefits to Albertans, wetland issues can be complex, involving many stakeholders with differing perspectives. The Alberta North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) Partnership is active in stakeholder outreach and education, especially with the municipal and agricultural sectors, as a way to help navigate this complexity.

This Progress Review highlights some great examples of these activities in 2024-25.

The municipal and agricultural sectors have important wetland responsibilities – and heightened information needs – under the Alberta Wetland Policy. The policy's goal is to “conserve, restore, protect, and manage Alberta's wetlands to sustain the benefits they provide to the environment, society, and economy.” The Partnership's outreach/education efforts are striving to increase understanding, capacity and collaboration on wetland conservation in these two sectors.

**THE PARTNERSHIP'S OUTREACH/ EDUCATION EFFORTS ARE STRIVING TO INCREASE UNDERSTANDING, CAPACITY AND COLLABORATION ON WETLAND CONSERVATION IN THESE TWO SECTORS.**

Agricultural landowners are essential players in wetland conservation because most of the wetlands in the province's settled area are on private land. So, Alberta NAWMP and its Partners are engaging with the farmers and ranchers who manage these working landscapes.

In *Conserving Waterfowl Habitat in a Working Landscape*, we look at the Cutbank Project of Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), one of the Partners. Since proper grazing and haying management can be consistent with habitat goals, the Cutbank property, like other DUC-owned conservation properties, will be available to local cattle producers through DUC's Alberta Hay and Graze Tender Program. Also, working with a producer on a grazing/haying tender can open opportunities to work with that producer on other DUC landowner programs. In addition, such DUC-owned properties are accessible to the public for recreation – another way to connect with Albertans.

Alberta municipalities have significant roles related to wetlands not only under the Wetland Policy but also other Alberta policies and legislation like the Municipal Government Act. In fact, municipalities are at the very challenging interface of wetland issues between landowners, developers, the public and others.

In *A Springboard for Municipal Action on Wetlands*, we celebrate the release of the latest edition of the Alberta Municipal Wetland Guide: Working with Wetlands. This Alberta NAWMP-sponsored guide is a way to support municipalities in their wetland roles, responsibilities and opportunities. The update was developed through the commitment and participation of diverse stakeholders with a vested interest in wetland conservation at the municipal level.

*What Drives Upland Sandpiper Population Trends?* features a study to analyze the effect of land cover changes – especially the conversion of grasslands to crops – as a driver of this bird's local breeding population trends. The study's results could help with conservation of this grassland shorebird as well as other midcontinental shorebirds and grassland birds who share the same landscapes that agricultural producers manage every day.

Although habitat conservation in working landscapes is very important, protecting natural areas is also vital to achieving the Partnership's habitat objectives. In *Adding to a Nexus of Conservation Lands*, we learn about the Boreal Sanctuary project. The Nature Conservancy of Canada, another Partner, purchased this property, which has amazingly diverse habitats that support an array of wildlife. The parcel contributes to a 1,068-acre block of intact habitat along the North Saskatchewan River, allowing wildlife to move through different habitat types and supporting ecosystem resilience and watershed health.

On behalf of Alberta NAWMP, I thank the many agencies and individuals who share our passion for conserving wetland and upland habitat and helped make this past year a success.

I am pleased to present the Alberta NAWMP Partnership 2024-2025 Progress Review.

**Sue Cotterill**  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Alberta NAWMP Partnership

NAWMP achieves its goals through voluntary partnerships that implement local actions. The Prairie Habitat Joint Venture (PHJV) is the 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. Conserving these landscapes is vital to the maintenance and recovery of midcontinent waterfowl populations.

The PHJV works with its provincial NAWMP counterparts in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba to carry out these IPs. The Alberta component of the IPs provides the framework for the Alberta NAWMP Partnership's activities. The 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 subcommittees. The board and committee members are mainly drawn from the five Partner agencies.

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.

10-20 20-30 30-40 40-50 50-60 60-70 70-80 80-100+

**TARGET LANDSCAPES**

## WHO IS ALBERTA NAWMP?

The motto of the Alberta NAWMP Partnership – Advancing Conservation Together – is at the heart of what we do and how we do it. Our focus is on conserving waterfowl and other bird populations and their key habitats. And our successes come from the synergy of working together, blending diverse perspectives, and creating fresh ideas.

The Partnership is composed of one federal and two provincial government departments and two non-government organizations that each 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 and upland stewardship efforts, launch innovative initiatives that otherwise might not happen, and build interest in and capacity for landscape conservation in Alberta.

Together, the Partners and their collaborators are making impressive progress on key conservation goals.

How wetland landscapes relate to each Partner agency's roles, objectives and responsibilities:

### GOVERNMENT

**Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation** includes a number of agencies, boards and commissions that support the agriculture and food sectors. Among the Ministry's responsibilities are policies, legislation, regulations and services necessary for those sectors to grow, prosper and diversify while supporting environmentally sustainable resource management practices and inspiring public confidence in the quality and safety of food.

**Alberta Environment and Protected Areas** is the lead provincial agency responsible for the stewardship of Alberta's air, land, water and biodiversity. It 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.

**Environment and Climate Change Canada** is the lead federal department for a wide range of environmental issues. The department's programs focus on minimizing threats to Canadians and their environment from pollution, and conserving and restoring Canada's natural environment, including water, air and soil quality.

### PRIVATE, NON-PROFIT

**Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC)** is a registered charity with over 85 years of experience in wetland conservation and restoration. DUC partners with government, landowners, industry, Indigenous peoples and other non-profit organizations to conserve, restore and manage wetlands and associated habitats to benefit waterfowl, wildlife and people.

**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, 2024-25

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**Katelyn Ceh**, Nature Conservancy of Canada

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**Jamie Wuite**, Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation

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**Nathalie S. Olson (Outgoing Chair)**, Alberta Environment and Protected Areas

**Melissa Orr-Langner**, Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation

### COORDINATOR

**Greg Hale**, Alberta NAWMP Partnership



The Cutbank Project in central Alberta



Dabbling ducks like this blue-winged teal are the main type of waterfowl in the area.

## CONSERVING WATERFOWL HABITAT IN A WORKING LANDSCAPE

The new Cutbank Project in central Alberta is an excellent example of how Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) conservation properties are sustaining waterfowl habitat in ways that are integrated with local communities both environmentally and economically.

**“WE HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT THESE PARCELS ARE PART OF A WORKING LANDSCAPE, AND HAYING AND GRAZING ARE PART OF THAT.”**

This project permanently secures a 130-hectare (320-acre) parcel with prime waterfowl habitat. With the high land prices nowadays, most of DUC's securement activities focus on options like its [revolving land conservation program](#) and [conservation easements](#). However, DUC secured the Cutbank parcel through a direct purchase under its long-term hold program mainly because the property fits really well with DUC's mandate.

The Cutbank Project definitely meets DUC's requirements for lands with high conservation value because of its location in DUC's Sullivan Lake Delivery Area. “The Sullivan Lake Delivery Area is a great place for waterfowl. The area is associated with very high duck density of breeding waterfowl, and the parcel's expected density is 50-plus breeding pairs per square mile in the spring. The parcel is also in a landscape that has a mix of perennial cover and wetland habitat with lots of intact wetlands,” explains Darwin Chambers, Alberta Head of Conservation Programs with DUC.

The project's location in the Sullivan Lake area also means that it is near some existing habitat projects. This meets another one of DUC's requirements because having multiple conservation projects in an area helps enhance habitat connectivity for wildlife and helps reduce stewardship costs associated with management of the properties because DUC can manage several parcels together.

In addition, like other DUC conservation projects, this project conserves not only waterfowl habitat but also other wetland benefits such as decreasing flood and drought impacts, improving water quality, increasing biodiversity, and recharging groundwater, contributing to healthy landscapes for local communities.

The Cutbank Project also helps cattle producers because the property will be available for haying and grazing through DUC's [Alberta Hay and Graze Tender Program](#). Annually, DUC makes some of its 90,000 acres in Alberta available for tender under this program; about 40,000 acres are under tender contracts in 2025. In this program, interested producers offer bids on available parcels. From the bids on a particular parcel, DUC chooses one producer to work with in managing the parcel that year.

DUC recognizes that proper grazing and haying management can be consistent with habitat goals for a parcel, helping to sustain vigorous perennial forage stands, contributing to weed control, and maintaining productive habitat. DUC ensures the tendered properties are managed with care, for example, by setting conservative stocking rates to maintain forage health, and by setting parcel entry

dates after mid-July when most breeding waterfowl are finished nesting in the perennial cover around wetlands.

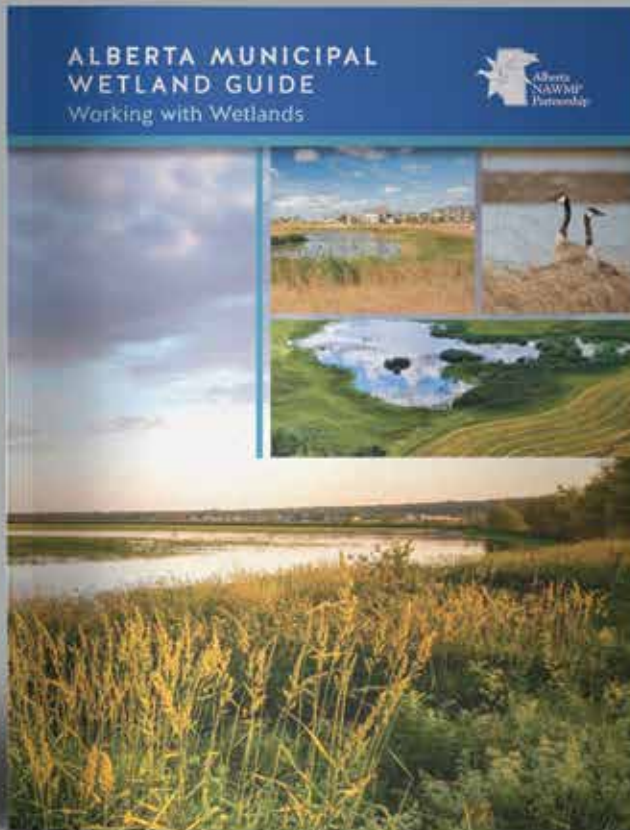
“We have to remember that these parcels are part of a working landscape, and haying and grazing are part of that,” says Chambers.

He adds, “I think it is important for conservation groups and organizations to be integrated within the local community. One reason is that it leads to more conservation. The better relationships that you can build with producers, whether it be managing your lands or working on their lands, the more it helps towards having further conversations about conservation.”

For instance, working with a producer on a grazing/haying tender could open doors to opportunities to work with the producer on one of DUC's other programs for [Alberta landowners](#) such as its [forage program](#).

In addition, the Cutbank Project and all other DUC-owned lands in Alberta are accessible to the public for recreation – another way that DUC builds connections with Albertans. These parcels can be used for activities such as photography, berry picking and hunting, and are open to foot access only. No overnight camping is permitted. If grazing or haying are happening on a parcel, recreational users need to be respectful, for example by leaving gates as they are.

The Cutbank Project is all about cooperative conservation in Alberta's working landscapes, securing long-term habitat protection while providing opportunities for landowners and recreationists.



## A SPRINGBOARD FOR MUNICIPAL ACTION ON WETLANDS

The latest edition of the **Alberta Municipal Wetland Guide: Working with Wetlands** is now available!

“Municipalities have a challenging job, dealing with multiple responsibilities, and wetlands are only one aspect of their work. However, municipalities are at the interface of wetland issues between landowners, developers, the public, and others. Their decisions and actions on wetlands are very important for the health of our landscapes. This Alberta NAWMP-sponsored guide is a way to support municipalities in that work,” says Greg Hale, the Alberta NAWMP Partnership’s coordinator.

The guide outlines key information about the roles and responsibilities of Alberta municipalities related to wetlands under the Alberta Wetland Policy (AWP), Municipal Government Act, and other policies and legislation, as well as highlighting benefits and opportunities that wetlands can bring to municipalities. It also provides links to further information, tools and support for dealing with this complex issue.

The guide is comprised of 10 modules. Each module presents a topic area, outlines how a municipality might approach the topic, and identifies resources to assist with this work. The modules also share great examples of Alberta municipalities taking action on wetland conservation.

The guide was originally created in response to some of the information dissemination needs arising from the AWP, released in 2013. Those needs prompted the creation of a multistakeholder Municipal Working Group to consider how to tackle the knowledge gap between the new policy and how the policy would be implemented at the municipal level.

Out of this Alberta NAWMP-sponsored initiative came the guide’s first edition, published in 2016, and a series of workshops on municipal wetland topics. Both efforts were aimed at building capacity and sharing ideas for addressing municipal wetland issues.

**“...MUNICIPALITIES ARE AT THE INTERFACE OF WETLAND ISSUES BETWEEN LANDOWNERS, DEVELOPERS, THE PUBLIC, AND OTHERS.”**

To develop the most recent update to the municipal wetland guide, Alberta NAWMP drew on the commitment and participation of many people from municipal governments and associations, Government of Alberta ministries, non-government conservation agencies, and others with a vested interest in wetland conservation at the municipal level.

Marissa Koop, a senior manager of environmental planning with the planning consulting firm B&A Studios, has been a member of the Municipal Working Group from the beginning and provided input on this latest update. She says that part of the guide’s intent is “to establish a common language and shared base level of understanding of municipal roles in wetland issues ... to try to build a framework for collaboration [with local farmers, developers, private landowners, industry], as opposed to what has sometimes been an adversarial process.”

Koop also emphasizes that the guide is intended to be a starting point only – a way to direct users to more information and resources available elsewhere. “Wetland policy is a massively large, complicated and interconnected issue... We need to look at things through many different lenses to make truly sustainable decisions that are economically, socially and environmentally responsible.”

Emily Kabotoff, an environmental planning specialist with Strathcona County, was also involved in the development of both the earlier guide and this updated version. She notes that one of the goals of the guide is to be an effective resource for municipalities regardless of where they are in their wetland journey. “You don’t have to read the guide from the start to the finish. You can just jump to the relevant section about whatever is of interest to you at that time, what kind of questions you are asking that day.”

She adds, “Wetlands affect so many different people within municipal administrations as well as elected officials... whether it is environmental professionals more like myself, or people like our planners, or those involved with policy making, or outreach staff, I think they all can find something in the guide that would be really useful.”

For a digital copy of the guide, go to the **Alberta NAWMP website**. For a printed copy, send an email to the **Alberta NAWMP coordinator**.

This excerpt from the Alberta Municipal Wetland Guide gives an example of one of the guide's many case studies, which share municipal actions on wetland conservation.

## Case Study

### Strathcona County Case Study: Implementing a wetland direction through a Municipal Wetland Conservation Directive

#### Where did we begin?

Planning and land use triggers supported the development of the county's initial Wetland Conservation Policy prior to the provincial Wetland Policy. The policy goal aligned assessments and mitigation reports to ensure efficient decision-making and avoid duplication between municipal and provincial processes. The target result would be no net loss of wetland form and function within the county's jurisdiction, including ephemeral wetlands.

#### What was the impact?

Integrating wetland awareness and conservation action into the planning and operational process resulted in the county leading by example. For the 10 years following the introduction of the Wetland Conservation Policy, approximately 204 hectares have been impacted by development. Avoidance, minimization and compensation measures have all been used. All developments met or exceeded the 3:1 mitigation ratio. Compensation included 59 hectares of naturalized stormwater management facilities, \$2.4 million paid by the county for wetland replacement fees, and 15 per cent directly applied to wetland restoration projects in the Beaver Hills.

#### What did we set out to do?

The success of the policy has also been reflected in the incorporation of policy statements and goals within the Municipal Development Plan. With that statutory foundation, the policy was updated in 2019

and reclassified as a directive, to focus implementation on the process that has been integrated into municipal procedures. The county has now partnered with the province in participating in the Wetland Replacement Program to re-establish wetlands on the landscape. Two projects have restored approximately 3.3 hectares of wetland area.

#### Policy summary:

Strathcona County values wetlands for current and future generations and therefore recognizes wetlands as important components of municipal infrastructures. The goal of No Net Loss is to balance the loss of wetland functions through rehabilitation of previously degraded wetlands or enhancement of healthy, functioning wetlands. As a last resort, compensation for lost functions will be sought through creation of wetlands where there was none before. Strathcona County will minimize or reverse wetland loss, conserve existing wetland resources, convey the importance of wetlands to developers, industry, and the public through education initiatives, and restore watershed function through wetland restoration projects.

#### What was the key learning of this initiative?

Relationships with provincial regulators are key in successful and coordinated implementation. Formal meetings regarding compliance issues, formal meetings regarding specific applications and informal discussions on process and decisions are imperative in reaching any municipal or provincial conservation goals. Committed municipal administrators from the planning and operations realm are the foundation for successful policy integration.



One of Strathcona County's Wetland Replacement Program projects during the first growing season after construction.  
**Strathcona County**



University of Saskatchewan MSc student Rosales takes measurements of an upland sandpiper.

## WHAT DRIVES UPLAND SANDPIPER POPULATION TRENDS?

Prairie conservationists have a keen interest in gaining a deeper understanding of landscape factors driving the varied breeding population trends of the upland sandpiper. This understanding is important not only for conserving this grassland shorebird itself, but also other midcontinental shorebirds and grassland birds who share the same landscapes. Overall, the breeding populations of shorebirds and of grassland birds have dramatically declined in North America in recent decades.

To help fill this gap in understanding, the Alberta NAWMP Partnership's Science Fund supported an upland sandpiper study to analyze land cover changes – especially the conversion of grasslands to agricultural crops – as a driver of the bird's local breeding population trends.

Andres Rosales, a University of Saskatchewan student, is conducting this study for a chapter in his master's thesis. His thesis research is guided by Drs. Kirsty Gurney and Ann McKellar, who are both with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), with valuable input from their ECCC colleague Dr. Scott Wilson.

Each spring, upland sandpipers migrate from South America to a large portion of Canada and the United States for breeding. Rosales notes that the study covers almost all of the upland sandpiper's entire breeding range, including the core range, which encompasses the Canadian Prairies and the Great Plains as far south as Kansas, and smaller areas as far east as Maine and New Brunswick.

Long-term, broad-scale estimates indicate the upland sandpiper's breeding population is fairly stable overall. But a more detailed look shows strong geographic variations, including some locations with population increases and others with steep decreases. Gurney says, "The big question is why are these different populations doing different things?"

As a ground-nesting species, the upland sandpiper needs large, open grasslands for nesting, explains Rosales. However, from the trapping and tagging work that is also being conducted on this species, he knows these birds also make use of pastures, hay fields, and even cereal and canola crops, especially in the Prairies. "Upland sandpipers are living in and using the same landscapes that producers manage every day."

**"UPLAND SANDPIPERS ARE LIVING IN AND USING THE SAME LANDSCAPES THAT PRODUCERS MANAGE EVERY DAY."**

The study's objective is to link grassland and cropland land cover changes with the upland sandpiper's local breeding trends, from 2012 to 2022.

For the 2012 to 2022 breeding trend estimates, Rosales used the eBird Status and Trends dataset. This community science dataset provides localized breeding trend estimates, each location representing a 27-kilometre circle, across the bird's entire breeding range.

Next, using two publicly available land cover datasets, he determined the change in grassland area and cropland area between 2012 and 2022 for each of the eBird trend locations. And then he used a model to see how the land cover changes relate to the population trends.

Rosales, who will be defending his thesis this fall, shares some of the preliminary results: "We found that upland sandpiper does not respond to land cover change the same way everywhere on its breeding grounds...Across North America, the expansion of cropland had a consistent negative effect on breeding abundance trends, which is what we expected to find. ...However, the effect of grassland change is a bit more nuanced." In some areas, grassland gains aligned with increased upland sandpiper abundance, as expected. Yet in other areas, grassland losses weren't associated with population declines.

He is now digging deeper to determine the drivers of these intriguing differences. "I'm looking at: if grassland was lost, what replaced grassland? Was it a cereal, an oilseed, forage agriculture? And if cropland expanded, was it replacing grasslands, shrublands, forested lands?"

Rosales sees multiple ways the study's results could help with targeting conservation actions and where future research could be needed. For example, the findings identify core grassland areas where conserving these critical habitats would pay off for upland sandpipers and likely for other grassland shorebirds and grassland birds in general.

In addition to Alberta NAWMP's support, this research also received funding from ECCC and in-kind support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Biodiversity Research Institute, and the University of Saskatchewan.

# ADDING TO A NEXUS OF CONSERVATION LANDS

Location, location, location – this real estate maxim could also apply to a remarkable conservation property recently purchased by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). Known as ‘Boreal Sanctuary,’ the property’s own high conservation value is made even greater by its prime location within a network of conservation lands in Alberta’s Upper North Saskatchewan River Basin.

“With the protected lands around this conservation project, it feels like you are immersed in nature,” says Katelyn Ceh, a director of conservation for NCC in Alberta. The 46.6-hectare (115-acre) parcel is about 65 kilometres southwest of Edmonton and lies right along the north side of the North Saskatchewan River.

“The property is an amazing mix of different habitat types including large wetlands and intact mixedwood forest,” she notes. This mix includes young and mature aspen stands, coniferous forests, and open grassland, with 28 per cent of the property consisting of water bodies and associated riparian zones. Thanks to such rich habitat diversity, the parcel supports an array of wildlife including moose, deer, bears, songbirds, upland birds, and wetland-dependent birds like waterfowl, as well as species at risk like the boreal toad. Along with providing habitat, the wetlands also perform many other functions like improving water quality, reducing flood peaks, mitigating drought effects, and storing carbon.

And then there is the Boreal Sanctuary project’s broader landscape context: its location within a long-standing priority conservation region for NCC and within a provincially designated Environmentally Significant Area.

“This property, which is connected through Crown [public] land to another NCC conservation site, contributes to a 1,068-acre block of intact habitat along the North Saskatchewan River,” explains Ceh.

“[The river valley] is also part of an important continental migratory bird flyway and provides resting and feeding habitat for millions of birds migrating through the area.”

She adds, “Building connectivity through projects like this one is increasingly vital in areas where habitat has been lost or fragmented. When we can add to existing protected areas or build on connectivity, it helps ensure wildlife can move through different habitat types, and also supports ecosystem resilience, which is really important.”

In addition, the parcel’s place within the North Saskatchewan River Basin means that it plays a part in sustaining the quality, health and resiliency of this major river, which supplies water to 1.2 million Albertans. “The North Saskatchewan River and the health of that river affect communities, as well as species and ecosystems, for hundreds of kilometres downstream,” she says.

To purchase this exceptional property in a critical region of Alberta, NCC worked with a dedicated landowner who wanted to see their land protected in perpetuity. The purchase was made possible by funds from the Government of Canada’s Natural Heritage Conservation Program and Cenovus Energy, as well as other private supporters.

**“WITH THE PROTECTED LANDS AROUND THIS CONSERVATION PROJECT, IT FEELS LIKE YOU ARE IMMERSSED IN NATURE.”**

Ceh concludes, “The Boreal Sanctuary project is exciting because it contributes to our broader effort and the effort of our partners to conserve ecologically significant lands in the Upper North Saskatchewan River Basin. We have worked in this area for a long time, and we’re very keen to continue doing what we can to protect the river and increase connectivity around the North Saskatchewan River. This project is a key piece to that effort. It is pretty neat to be a part of it!”

The Boreal Sanctuary project in the Upper North Saskatchewan River Basin in Alberta.



# COMMITTEE REPORTS, 2024-25

## 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 in the fiscal year 2024-25 (FY25), providing guidance to the Management Committee and Policy and Communications subcommittees. The FY25 Work Plan and Budget was successfully implemented, and the final report completed. Also, FY26 Work Plan projections were developed. Board members participated in and engaged with the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture (PHJV) Advisory Board and various subcommittees, including hosting internal presentations and discussions related to human dimensions and a wetland policy initiative. Support was provided to various grant funding initiatives through the Partnership and the PHJV. Support to the PHJV Implementation Plan (IP) continued. The Board initiated strategic planning discussions with a goal of having a draft Strategic Plan for Alberta NAWMP completed by early FY26, to help guide and align with existing and future PHJV IPs.

## 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 held monthly meetings including additional topic-specific meetings. Two joint meetings were held with the Board. The Committee approved Science Fund support to two research projects on: prairie agricultural producers' preferences for approaches that conserve wetlands; and upland sandpiper population drivers. The Committee provided support to the Policy and Communications subcommittees and to the Board's strategic planning initiative. All birds' conservation continued to be highlighted with specific focus on grassland stewardship, especially native grasslands. Continued support was provided to PHJV Policy, Human Dimensions, Science and Communications Committees. The FY25 Work Plan and Budget was successfully implemented.

## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

*This Committee leads information sharing, event hosting and promotion among the Partner agencies and beyond. Members are typically communication specialists from each Partner agency.*

The Communications Committee met monthly, including project-specific meetings. It continued to implement the Partnership's Communication Strategy, including revising [abnawmp.ca](https://abnawmp.ca) and refreshing [wetlandsalberta.ca](https://wetlandsalberta.ca). Ongoing communication efforts included the quarterly eNewsletter and Science Stories series profiling Alberta NAWMP-funded research. Also, it promoted events such as World Wetlands Day and increased outreach to the agricultural and municipal sectors on topics related to Alberta's Wetland Policy, with articles targeted in digital and print media. Other successful activities included ongoing distribution of the Landowner Guide to the Alberta Wetland Policy (fourth printing). The new Alberta Municipal Wetland Guide: Working with Wetlands (AMWG) was developed with municipal representatives and partnering organizations. The AMWG's distribution will commence in FY26 with help from the municipal sector. Alberta NAWMP also featured prominently in several key events, including Tofield's Snow Goose Festival, highlighting the importance of wetland conservation, and helping raise the profile of Alberta NAWMP and its Partners. The Progress Review for FY24 was completed.

## POLICY COMMITTEE

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

The Policy Committee met monthly including specific project meetings by working group members. Several key projects were implemented including: a jurisdictional scan of wetland reclamation timelines; a review of existing wetland and grassland conservation land use bylaws; and a literature review and scan of key messages related to the value of native grasslands in drought resiliency. In addition, Alberta NAWMP contributed to the PHJV Policy Committee's efforts on interprovincial grassland policy discussions. Engagement with the municipal and agricultural sectors continued to be a priority, including collaboration with the municipal sector on creation of the AMWG. Presentations on the Landowner Guide were made to several agricultural sector groups, resulting in more opportunities for engagement through sector-based newsletters and articles.

# CONTRIBUTIONS TO NAWMP IN ALBERTA, 2024-25 AND 1986-2025

AGENCY TYPE	AGENCY	2024-25 TOTAL	1986-2025 <sup>a</sup> CUM. TOTAL
CANADIAN CORPORATIONS		\$276,371	\$25,790,485
CANADIAN EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS			\$475,281
CANADIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada		\$38,532,523
	Canadian federal - unspecified		\$484
	Environment and Climate Change Canada		\$21,482
	Environment and Climate Change Canada - Canada Nature Fund	\$2,030,498	\$12,000,026
	Environment and Climate Change Canada - Canadian Wildlife Service	\$585,321	\$44,122,161
	Environment and Climate Change Canada - EcoAction		\$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
	Environment and Climate Change Canada - Natural Heritage Conservation Program		\$779,684
	Environment and Climate Change Canada - Nature Smart Climate Solutions	\$344,775	\$3,631,883
	Fisheries and Oceans Canada		\$3,940
	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada		\$18,761
	Millennium Bureau of Canada		\$1,120,100
	Natural Resources Canada		\$40,000
	Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada		\$194,736
	Parks Canada		\$54,660
	Public Works and Government Services Canada	\$8,400	\$8,900
		\$2,968,994	\$132,870,493
CANADIAN NOT FOR PROFIT	Agriculture and Food Council of Alberta		\$275,000
	Alberta Beef Producers		\$954,531
	Alberta Conservation Association		\$4,571,184
	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	\$3,979,729	\$21,740,149
	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
	Carthy Foundation		\$6,162
	Climate Change Central		\$5,000
	Cropmasters		\$46,300
	Dairy Farmers of Canada		\$11,360
	Ducks Unlimited Canada		\$3,377,366
	Eastern Irrigation District		\$75,085
	Edmonton Community Foundation		\$72,075
	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
	Manitoba Habitat Conservancy		\$45,317
	Nature Alberta		\$15,000
	Nature Canada		\$1,128,000
	Nature Conservancy of Canada	\$35,908	\$15,296,461
	North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance		\$234,023
	Peace Parkland Naturalists		\$600
	Pheasants Forever	\$28,641	\$67,400
	Project Second Life Society		\$6,000
	Richard H. G. Bonnycastle Graduate Fellowship		\$15,000
	Richardson Foundation Inc.		\$374,788

AGENCY TYPE	AGENCY	2024-25 TOTAL	1986-2025 <sup>a</sup> CUM. TOTAL
CANADIAN NOT FOR PROFIT	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
	Southern Alberta Land Trust Society		\$613,119
	Sustainable Forest Management Network		\$20,000
	The Calgary Foundation		\$47,444
	The Flanagan Foundation		\$29,049
	The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation		\$6,999
	The Kahanoff Foundation		\$701
	United Farmers of Alberta		\$18,447
	Waterton Biosphere Reserve Association		\$100,000
	Western Irrigation District		\$673,433
	Weston Family Foundation	\$481,853	\$2,545,732
	Wildlife Habitat Canada	\$119,277	\$4,656,318
	World Wildlife Fund Canada		\$36,000
		\$4,645,408	\$58,933,217
CANADIAN PROVINCIAL & TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS	Agriculture Financial Services Corporation		\$446,527
	Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation		\$10,570,726
	Alberta Culture and Community Spirit		\$8,000
	Alberta Energy and Utilities Board		\$8,300
	Alberta Environment and Protected Areas	\$16,780 <sup>b</sup>	\$43,184,353
	Alberta Transportation		\$9,246
	Alberta Treasury Board and Finance		\$771,967
	Saskatchewan Water Security Agency		\$10,000
		\$16,780	\$55,009,119
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)		\$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		\$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
			\$1,974,191
CANADIAN OTHER	Canadian - unspecified	\$27,147,688	\$88,627,419
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	\$12,622,753	\$349,931,975
INTERNATIONAL	Conservation International Bahamas		\$59,744
GRAND TOTAL		\$47,677,994	\$713,671,924

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

b. Funds as reported are part of an overall annual contribution exceeding \$400,000 and could be in addition to, or part of, those reported.

# ACTIVITY EXPENDITURES AND HABITAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2024-25 AND 1986-2025

AGENCY	ACTIVITY	EXPENDITURES 2024-25	HABITAT ACRES 2024-25	NET HABITAT ACRES 1986-2025
<b>ALBERTA AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION</b> <small>(includes Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, a former Alberta NAWMP Partner)</small>	Securement			425,195
<b>ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT AND PROTECTED AREAS</b>	Securement			10,507
<b>DELTA WATERFOWL FOUNDATION</b>	Communication and education	\$6,367		
	Management (habitat assets)	\$13,166	907	3,047
	Wetland restoration	\$10,000	67	78
<b>DWF TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>\$29,533</b>		
<b>DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA</b>	Communication and education	\$10,646		
	Compensatory mitigation	\$2,905,122	691	5,652
	Conservation planning	\$111		
	Habitat Joint Venture science	\$795,938		
	Habitat restoration	\$2,358,447	222,821	1,301,452
	Habitat retention (≥10 years through permanent)	\$6,768,321	19,982	2,471,776
	Habitat retention (<10 years)	\$869,728	10,477	510,334
	Land and water policy support	\$1,107		-175,320*
	Management (habitat assets)	\$4,985,799		2,561,136
<b>DUC TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>\$18,695,219</b>		
<b>ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE CANADA – CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE</b>	Communication and education	\$4,367		
	Habitat Joint Venture science	\$129,167		
<b>ECCC TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>\$133,534</b>		
<b>NATURE CONSERVANCY OF CANADA</b>	Conservation planning	\$53,765		
	Habitat restoration	\$69,397		73,142
	Habitat retention (≥10 years through permanent)	\$28,759,610	329	386,951
	Management (habitat assets)	\$363,760	329	389,063
<b>NCC TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>\$29,246,532</b>		
<b>OTHER AGENCIES</b>	Communication and education; Conservation planning; Habitat Joint Venture science; Land and water policy support	\$85,456		4,133
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES 2024-25</b>		<b>\$48,190,274</b>		
<b>TOTAL HABITAT RETENTION ACRES (≥10 Years through Permanent), 2024-25 and 1986-2025</b>			<b>20,311</b>	<b>3,294,429</b>

## 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 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.
- Compensatory mitigation: involves creation, preservation, restoration and/or enhancement of wetlands or uplands as compensation for impacts on other wetlands or uplands.

- 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, 2024-25: habitat acres retained, restored or managed between April 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025. NOTE: total acres are not cumulative.
- Net Habitat Acres, 1986-2025: cumulative total of habitat acres since 1986, less expired agreements.

\* Denotes change in acre status from 2008 reporting period.

## 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. A key partner to the **Prairie Habitat Joint Venture**, Alberta NAWMP's 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 2025 is available at **[abnawmp.ca](http://abnawmp.ca)**

### PHOTO CREDITS

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#### Alberta NAWMP Partnership and its Partners



Environment and  
Climate Change Canada  
Environnement et  
Changement climatique Canada



#### Other National and International NAWMP Partners

North American  
Wetlands  
Conservation Act



*North American Waterfowl  
Management Plan*



prairie habitat  
*joint venture*



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