



News Release

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For Immediate Release

ACA Announces Habitat Theme for 2005 Partners In Conservation Conference

The Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) has announced details of a major conference scheduled for early in the new year. The two-day Partners In Conservation conference takes place **January 27 and 28, 2005** at Calgary's Glenmore Inn and Convention Centre and will focus on developing working collaborative habitat strategies for Alberta.

This is the third Partners In Conservation conference produced by ACA; the popular event was last held in Edmonton in 2003. With over 300 people expected to attend, the event will be of interest to the media, conservation groups, science and research, government staff, outdoor education programs, fish and game associations, and corporate conservationists.

This year's conference has a practical, working focus designed to create an environment where various conservation organizations share knowledge and success stories related to habitat work in Alberta. The goal is to effectively address Alberta's habitat needs by identifying priorities while facilitating cooperation among the various organizations. It is hoped that by the end of the conference, the open forum discussions will generate enough interest to consider forming a collaborative habitat-working group.

"This conference is a unique chance to come together as a conservation community," explains **Trevor Thera**, ACA's Director of Operations and Strategy. "As a group, we'll pause to review where we've been, examine the current state of habitat conservation, and then look forward in a very constructive way to determine where we need to go next."

The conference is divided into four main sessions, each examining a specific perspective of habitat challenges:

- Current habitat needs in Alberta from a variety of stakeholder views
- Status of habitat programs in other geographical jurisdictions
- Where we are currently and where we are going with habitat programs in Alberta
- Round table working session to determine future priorities and action steps

Developing effective habitat strategies is not an issue exclusive to Alberta. To provide a wider perspective on potential solutions, the conference will include presenters from other jurisdictions to share their success stories and challenges. Invitations for session presenters have been issued to a variety of groups such as the Canadian Wildlife Service, University of Alberta, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the National Wild Turkey Federation, Sierra Club Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and conservation groups from across the province. The final roster of keynote speakers and session presenters will be announced early in the new year.

The habitat focus is an obvious choice for a conference based on collaboration. **Dr. Mark Boyce**, ACA's Chair in Fisheries and Wildlife notes that wildlife biologists have long recognized that habitats are the bottom line to wildlife conservation. "We cannot expect wildlife management to have any significance if habitats are not available" states Dr. Boyce. "We are losing wildlife habitats at an unprecedented rate in Alberta, making it of utmost importance that we understand habitat relationships if we want to ensure the persistence of wildlife resources in the province." By bringing together diverse groups, with different viewpoints, the PIC conference will provide an opportunity to identify common elements for habitat programming and showcase the power of collaboration.

In addition to the sessions, the conference also features luncheons, a banquet, keynote speakers, networking opportunities and poster sessions with an associated awards program. An informal Wednesday night social event has also been added for registrants and other conference attendees to take advantage of early networking opportunities. Early bird and student pricing is available. **For more information and to register online visit www.ab-conservation.com.**

The Alberta Conservation Association is a non-profit, non-government association funded by hunters and anglers in partnership with other conservationists and working collaboratively to conserve and enhance Alberta's wildlife, fish and habitat. For comprehensive coverage of ACA activities, visit our website www.ab-conservation.com.

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