

Spring 2017



Alberta Hunter Education
Instructors' Association



Conservation Education

The Voice of Conservation Education in Alberta

Magazine



Honouring an Outstanding Albertan

2017 W.I.S.E. AWARDS

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Honouring an Outstanding Albertan

15th Annual W.I.S.E. Awards

February 11, 2017

By Robert Gruszecki



Robert Gruszecki
President - A.H.E.I.A.

February 11th, 2017 marked the 15th annual Conservation Education WISE Foundation Awards and Banquet at the BMO Centre, Stampede Park. Despite an economy still challenged by difficulties in the Oil and Gas sector, which affects every other industry in the province,

our members and advocates from across Alberta and beyond showed their support by attending and donating items for auction. Over 400 people joined us to celebrate the cause and to honour a worthy Albertan for his work done in the name of conservation education.

Among the attendees were Associate Minister for Health, Brandy Payne, and MLA for West Yellowhead, Eric Rosendahl. As Minister Payne was unable to stay for the entire evening, Mr. Rosendahl spoke to the assembly, reaffirming his faith in the work we do. In addition to these distinguished guests, we received letters from Minister of Environment and Parks, Shannon Phillips and Calgary Mayor, Naheed Nenshi, congratulating the Conservation Education WISE Foundation on our achievements. Minister Phillips wrote that her government "is always excited to partner with groups like this one who share our passion for our environment." She acknowledged our recent achievements, "more than 100,000 graduates of your Conservation Education Programs last year", and looked forward to a prosperous 2017 when "most exciting, your programs will exceed two million graduates." Mayor Nenshi welcomed guests to the event and added that this "event provides a wonderful opportunity to recognize Albertans who have dedicated their time and talent to conservation education." The Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association enjoys a cooperative partnership with all levels of government and gladly anticipates a lengthy continuation of this powerful alliance.

Just as 2015 saw us break the record number of students set in 2014, in 2016 we continued the trend and set a new record of 100,000 students graduating from all facets of conservation education provided by AHEIA. With the increased course offerings, including the Pleasure Craft Operator Training (PCOT) and the development of a Sheep Education program, there is no doubt that 2017's students will include the 2,000,000th

graduate. The success of AHEIA's programs and the benefits they bring to Albertans are a direct result of the tireless efforts and socially responsible engagement that our volunteers bring to conservation education. Without you, this province and our cherished native environs would be considerably diminished and with a gravely uncertain future. Thank you for your unflagging service.

This year at the WISE Awards, one exceptional Albertan was recognized for his lifetime of contributions to our cause and awarded the Alva Bair Memorial Conservation Award. The following is an excerpt of the presentation made to honour this outstanding individual.

The Alva Bair Memorial Conservation Award

Each year a person is selected to receive the Alva Bair Memorial Conservation Award. The presentation is intended to honour the memory and amazing contribution to the cause of conservation made by Alva. The recipients are recognized for demonstrating similar levels of passion and commitment to wildlife that Alva did. By presenting this award, Alva's name, personality and love for wild things and wild places will be perpetuated.

As a pioneer in the conservation movement, Alva was able to create and share a vision with all who

were interested. His vision was for a future that included viable wildlife populations and a society that recognized the value of wildlife and the contribution that wild creatures make to the overall quality of our lives. Alva was a leader among a large group of conservation-minded people from every part of the North American continent.

These people were responsible for creating a conservation movement that has become the most successful effort of its kind in the history of the world. Wildlife populations were at all-time lows during the early 1900s and, beginning in the 1930s, the modern conservation movement was relentless in its accumulated determination to ensure that wildlife, fish and the places these resources lived would have a secure place in our future.

It remains a wonderful cause. Wildlife needs the attention and help of all of us.

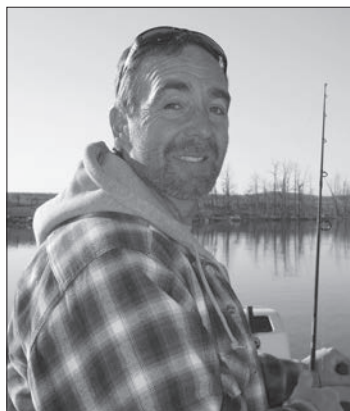
The award is designed to encourage all people to become involved and to lean on those who went before us to show us how to do it. Such a conservation giant was Alva Bair.

The Alva Bair Memorial Conservation Award is presented to the volunteer who most exemplifies that which Alva Bair represented during his life: our connection between wildlife and wild places.

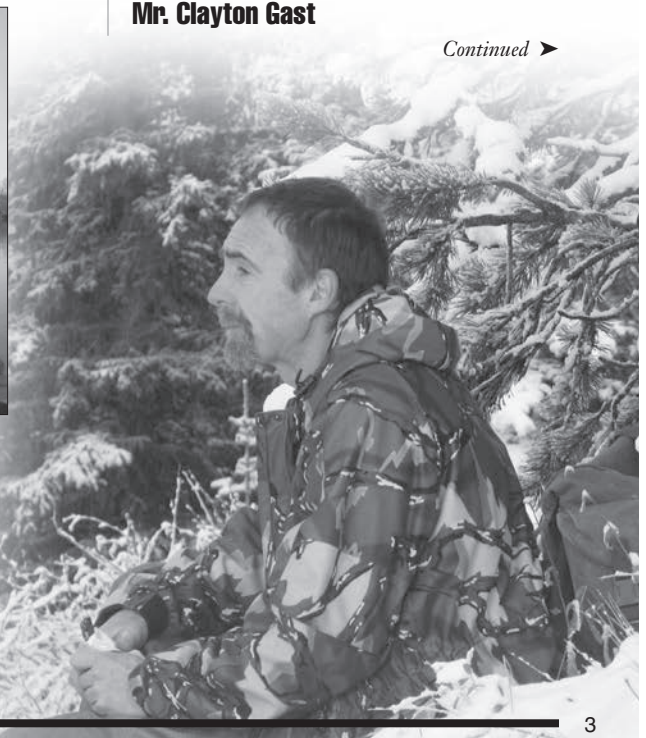
This year's recipient has spent his entire life perpetuating this type of commitment:

Mr. Clayton Gast

Continued ➤



"When he thinks of what his legacy will be, Clayton hopes his students will remember him as a man who took the time to teach something he loved ..."





Clayton's interest in conservation began at age seven, when he got his first motorcycle. He would ride the half mile to a coulee on their farm with his fishing rod and pellet gun to fish, hunt and catch frogs. Later, when he worked the farm with his father, an article about a habitat retention program caught his eye and they set aside his youthful hunting grounds for this, planting native grasses and leaving it to be undeveloped natural habitat. Today, he mows a mile long winding path alongside Pothole Creek and up the hill for kids and adults alike to enjoy the now-rare experience of walking in the tall grass.

As a young rifle hunter, teaching came naturally to Clayton, who began mentoring friends and family on deer hunts when he was 25 years old. He was teaching people even before he realized he was teaching. It was while mentoring a friend that he realized it was the 20th deer harvest he'd been involved in that year. He realized that rifle hunting didn't hold the same challenge that it used to, and Clayton found himself in an archery shop buying a bow.

For the next decade, Clayton only hunted with a bow. Archery was a new, sharper learning curve. There were fewer bowhunters at that time, and much of his time was spent practicing and hunting alone. Success came and, after 15 years of bowhunting, Clayton found himself in another archery shop, this time buying a very fancy

compound bow. Taking it out for the first time, a whitetail presented itself 30 yards away and was taken easily with the fancy new bow and all of its bells and whistles. Again, feeling a lack of challenge and satisfaction, Clayton took the next step; he hung the compound bow up, bought a recurve and fell in love all over again.

This was really back to the basics — no sights, no fancy tricks, just lots and lots of practice. After 4000-5000 shots and an injured shoulder, Clayton felt confident enough to get back to hunting. This was not particularly successful at first, but his enjoyment in just being outside and watching the arrows fly, kept him practicing until the hunts became more fruitful.

Now, with his passion back in full swing, it was time to buy some 15 lb recurve bows and teach his kids to shoot. Shortly after the purchase, a friend who was visiting picked up one of the little bows and, after trying it, was so excited that he too joined the sport. This was the beginning of an extreme increase in students for Clayton.

With the help of a successful grant application, Clayton's Fish and Game club was able to purchase traditional archery equipment for teaching. People began to come out to learn — kids and adults alike; though classes were primarily geared for kids, their parents became curious and, later, enthusiastic archers as well. Ten years ago, Clayton and a friend took over running "Fun



“ His message to the government is that now, more than ever, it is important to identify special habitat areas for protection. ”

Fish Days” at the Magrath pond, and added archery to the activities there. He's even taken the bows to his Sunday School, where parents are amazed by the kids' abilities and their newfound love of the simple yet rewarding sport. Archery was becoming so popular that he turned a heated shop at the farm into an indoor range. After a few years of windows being shot out and arrow holes in the doors, this was moved to another building on the farm with a bit more room.

His methods of teaching archery are creative: students start by breaking balloons or clay targets attached to target butts because they're "fun to shoot". A more advanced tactic is to pop out the centre of a clay bird and challenge them to land their arrows within the outer circle, leaving the clay undamaged. One student, the teen-aged son of a friend, was able to place three arrows into the centre on his first day of shooting. Accomplishments like this really stand out for Clayton. The targets get smaller as the level of success increases, and kids work their way up to hitting a lifesaver hung on a fishing line. Kids are amazed when they can hit this; it is very rewarding and moving to see kids congratulating each other on a seemingly impossible act. The sense of wonder a student experiences when they hit the target, is all the motivation Clayton needs.

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- Front Cover Photo: Robert Gruszecki (left) and Eric Rosendahl (centre) presenting the 2017 Alva Bair Memorial Conservation Award to Clayton Gast (right).

AHEIA needed a home for their Southern Alberta skeet trailer; Clayton volunteered and it became a fixture on the farm. After taking a Range Safety Officer course from Bob Gruszecki at AHEIA, Clayton opened up his farm to kids, novices of all ages and instructors for their own shooting. He has a skeet thrower and has stacked large square bales "like Lego" to make a range there. Now, any given summer day will find visitors occupied in shooting shotguns and archery with 3D targets and balloons.

Clayton was heavily influenced by local Fish and Wildlife officer and previous WISE Award winner, Lyle Lester, who set such a stellar example for the community of good sportsmanship and responsible resource use that "no one wanted to let him down". He laments a seeming lack of connection between the newly graduated conservation officers and nature. How to overcome this? "Send them on a mentored hunt with AHEIA," says Clayton. Law enforcement can't be effective if they are detached from the land and those engaged in outdoor pursuits. A passion for wildlife and wilderness can't be fostered by reading about it in a book.

Shaped by memories of his father, Clayton recalls that "Dad brought me everywhere", to experience hunting and fishing. As a man grown, the tables were turned and it was Clayton taking his father out to hunt and fish. It was this one-on-one time in nature that inspires Clayton to share the outdoors and traditional skills with others.

Clayton's family has now swelled to six kids, all of whom have benefitted from this outdoor education. Though his kids no longer hunt, the boys still help out on "sausage day", and his daughter never misses an opportunity to go out on the boat or for a walk. It was on such a walk three winters ago while target shooting that he missed a shot and encouraged his daughter to aim for that arrow, now lying on the ground. She not only hit the arrow, but broke it in two; one of his proudest memories.

All of his kids grew up camping, and none is afraid of sleeping on the ground. They've all hunted, caught fish, slept in tents and, on one memorable occasion, Clayton and his daughter decided to take a "survival trip" with only their bows and rods, an axe and a water filter. It was a cold, hungry night that eventually ended in take-out burgers, but the experience was priceless.

When he thinks of what his legacy will be, Clayton hopes his students will remember him as a man who took the time to teach something he loved, giving them valuable one-on-one attention. Ideally, his students will take their acquired knowledge, pass it on to the next person and find the joys in teaching others while maintaining their own relationships with conservation activities.

In response to a query about the impact he's had on his students, Clayton reminisces about a surprise phone call he received last fall. A man in his 30s called to ask if he could bring his wife out for her first deer hunt on the Gast land. Explaining who he was, the man recalled that 20 years earlier he had been there with Clayton, who had shown the young man how to shoot a gun. The boy had since grown up, was married with children of his own and wanted to share the experi-

ences that had shaped him with his family. The man remembered every moment of his own first experience, and wanted Clayton to be part of his wife's conservation education as well. Clayton took the couple out and spent some time with them, creating more lasting memories or, as he calls it, "adding another colour to someone else's palette".

His message to the government is that now, more than ever, it is important to identify special habitat areas for protection. They need to work with landowners to make it financially viable to remove these areas from production and preserve wildlife habitat. It is also critical to educate farmers on the deep impact minor adjustments to land use can have for wildlife, like the simple act of leaving a two foot fence line around their property untouched for deer, partridge, coyotes and more. Habitat population increases and decreases like a ripple in a pond based on available food and shelter. It takes the practiced eye of a hunter to see what a habitat requires to meet the needs of its population; it's a hunter's concern for conservation that causes them to provide for wildlife, ultimately ensuring sustainability. Non-hunters don't have that intimate and in-depth knowledge of the natural world.

The Gast farm has 147 acres set aside for wildlife habitat. Clayton has incorporated a food plot to help pheasants in the winter, re-established pasture for the insects that birds enjoy, even pulled weeds by hand where necessary. The benefits of leaving this land untouched are so obvious to him that another 1-2 acre food plot is already in the works.

The coulee has evolved since it was first set aside and native grasses planted. The area has matured into a sanctuary for people and animals alike: the wildlife community has increased, a shack has been built for basic shelter, and campfires are held there now. Another half acre of land has been sown with grass to make a Frisbee court, and Clayton is already eyeing it for archery tag. No wonder people stop in regularly to visit; he's built a wonderland for outdoors people!

If Clayton could leave one message with us all, it's to go for a walk. Get outside! Put down the device for a while and go someplace where you can't hear traffic. Connection to the land is so important, but it's becoming less and less common in our society. With a little effort — and lots of enjoyment — we can reverse this for the benefit of all.

As this article goes to print, spring will finally be upon us. All the more reason to get outside and enjoy the great outdoors.

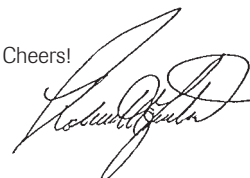
Join us at one of the events scheduled at the Calgary Firearms Centre or at one of the camps scheduled at Alford Lake this summer. We also have leagues for ladies and youth at the CFC that you should check out.

- May 3: First session of the Ladies Trapshooting League begins;
- July 5: Second session of the Ladies Trapshooting League begins;
- September 6: Third session of the Ladies Trapshooting League begins;
- Youth Hunter Education Camps will run July 2-7, July 9-14, July 16-21 and July 23-28, 2017 at the Alford Lake Conservation Education Centre for Excellence;
- The Outdoor Women's Program (OWP) will run August 9-13 at the Alford Lake Conservation Education Centre for Excellence.

Watch upcoming mail-outs and magazines for details of some new and exciting fundraising raffles. We are sure to have something to pique everyone's interest.

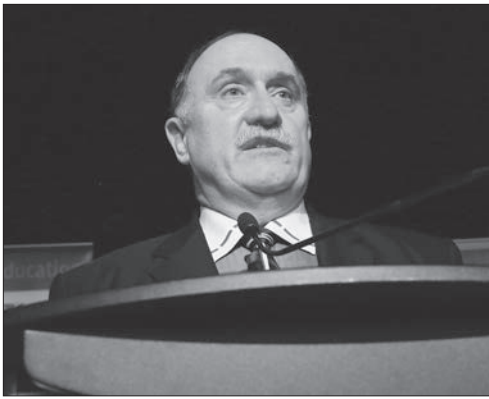
Here's hoping you have a great spring and summer, and we'll see you soon.

Cheers!



Robert A. Gruszecki, President

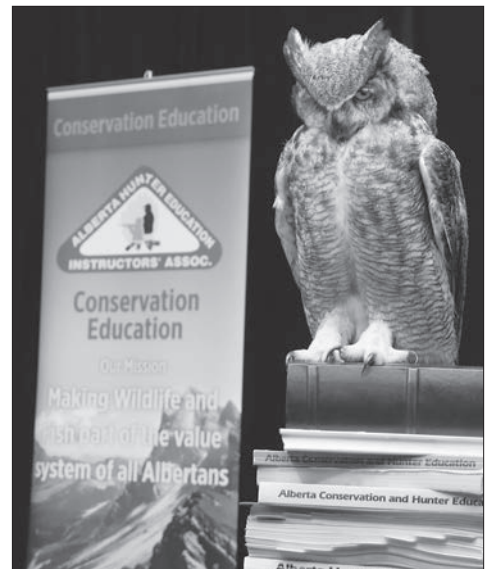
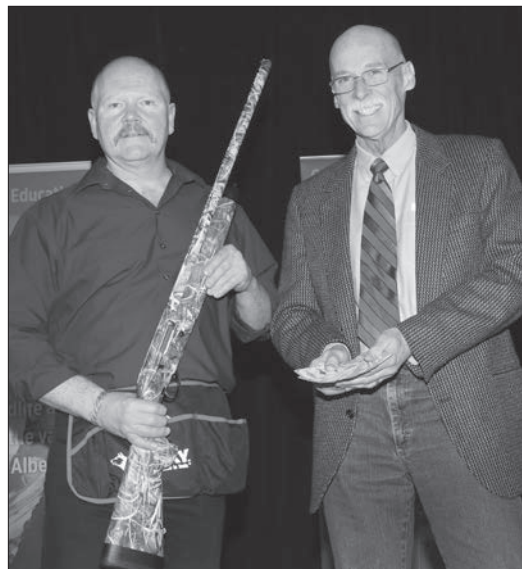




The Conservation Education W.I.S.E. Foundation & the Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association present the

15th Annual W.I.S.E. Awards & Banquet







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Firearms Education Report

“ In spite of all of the changes, instructors province wide managed to instruct approximately 40,000 new students! ”

By Glenn McKay



Glenn McKay
Firearms Education
Coordinator
AHEIA

In July 2016, the method of delivery of the Canadian Firearms Program changed. Gone from the program was the use (unless it is an emergency) of overhead slides and the 42 minute *Aiming for Safety* video. The two student handbooks were combined into one book which will allow the student access to both programs. Teaching the non-restricted course is still an eight hour (plus testing) course, and if you take the restricted course within seven days of taking the non-restricted course, it is a four hour (plus testing) course. If you had taken the non-restricted

course more than seven days ago, then it is a six hour course (plus testing).

What does this mean to the student? Prior to the change in the delivery of the course, all current instructors were given a chance to meet to go over the new teaching methods, see the material, and then decide if it is something they could continue to instruct. All of the instructors then signed a contract with the Chief Firearms Officer saying they understood the rules and would teach the course accordingly. The student would then enjoy a PowerPoint presentation for the course and, within this, they could watch certain aspects of the material via an “embedded video”. This is a very positive step in making the course better than what it was. Is it perfect? No. Is it an upgrade? Yes.


In spite of all of the changes, instructors province wide managed to instruct approximately

40,000 new students! I am really not sure where the new students come from, but they continue to attend a class and become educated in the firearms world. 2017 will see new instructors taught to replace those who are no longer with the program. It is hoped that those within the program embrace the new material and make it a better learning platform for the new students.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call me or drop me a line.

Contact Glenn at the Calgary office,
403-319-2282 (direct line) or
via email at bgm@aheia.com.




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Edmonton Report



“ A number of instructors have expressed surprise at the resource materials we have available for their use. ”

By Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
AHEIA
Red Deer - North

Our 2017 Youth Hunter Education Camps will run July 2-7, July 9-14, July 16-21 and July 23-28. Registration forms are available for download on our website. Don't be disappointed, as the camps traditionally sell out quickly.

The 2017 Outdoor Youth Seminar is slated for August 25-27. I am still working on the logistics and will have it completed shortly. To be placed on our Advance Notification List, please email your request to edmontoninfo@acheia.com. Those on the list will receive registration information prior to it being released to the general public.

Please join us on September 9 for an Antler Scoring Workshop in our Edmonton office. Join our very own official scorer, Dave Paplawski, for an informative session on scoring antlers and more. Dave is an officially certified scorer with Boone and Crockett, as well as with Pope and Young. The 2017 Antler Scoring Workshop will provide participants with hands-on training on how to score their trophy using the Boone and Crockett system. All materials are included along with Dave's expertise. Coffee and snacks will also be provided. Download your registration form from our website www.acheia.com or give me a shout.

A Range Officer Workshop runs April 22, followed by our Shotgun Coaching Workshop on April 23. Both events will be held at our Alford Lake facility and registration forms are available for download at www.acheia.com. These workshops are open to all AHEIA instructors in good

standing. For more information or to register, please contact me directly at len@acheia.com.

A special thanks to all the volunteers who assisted at the 2017 Edmonton Boat and Sportsmen's Show. Your generosity and dedication once again helped make the event a big success. You all make my job easier, so thank you very much!

Please mark June 1, 2017 on your calendars. We will be holding our fourth annual Spring Fling Banquet in Edmonton on that day. For more information, please contact me directly at len@acheia.com. We are already working diligently to make the 2017 banquet another great event. Purchase your tickets no later than noon on Monday, May 1 and you will be entered into our Early Bird Draw. Up for grabs is a Savage Mark II Camo .22 calibre bolt action rifle with detachable magazine, AccuTrigger, and complete with Nikon PROSTAFF Rimfire II 3-9x40 scope with BDC150 reticle, designed especially for the rimfire rifle. Also includes bases, rings, 325 rounds of .22LR ammunition and a hard gun case. Retail value \$634.00.

We continue to look for volunteer assistance for all of our courses, camps, events, etc. If you or any of our friends wish to become part of something bigger, please let me know. Giving back has great personal rewards. The more help we get the better.

A number of instructors have expressed surprise at the resource materials we have available for their use. This is a partial list:

- Disabled non-restricted firearms kit
- Disabled restricted firearms kit
- Fur kit (samples of big game and fur bearing animal hides and furs)
- Antler kit (samples of horns, antlers and skulls)
- Spinning/spin cast rod and reel kits

- Fly fishing kit (contains fly rod and reels)
- Fly tying kit (contains the necessary tools to tie flies)
- VHS tape library
- 16mm film library
- DVD video library
- Reference book library
- Making tracks kit (for youngsters to make their own game tracks using homemade moulding clay)

If you have any questions regarding how to access these kits or to receive a complete listing, just give me a call or drop me a line.

There are still a number of the Canadian Firearms Program instructors out there who still need to teach courses to comply with their commitment with the CFO. If you are having difficulty teaching the required number of courses per year, we can help. Contact the Edmonton or Calgary office and we will get you to assist with teaching one of our in-house courses. The deadline is fast approaching. You may also like to attend one of our classes as a refresher. Either way we could use the help and it is a positive situation for everyone.

Until next time.

*Take Care and
Enjoy the Great Outdoors!*



Spring Fling Early Bird Draw



**Purchase your tickets for the 2017 Spring Fling
no later than Monday, May 1 at noon
and you will be entered into our Early Bird Draw!**

Up for grabs is a Savage Mark II Camo .22 calibre bolt action rifle with detachable magazine, AccuTrigger complete with Nikon PROSTAFF Rimfire II 3-9x40 scope with BDC150 reticle designed especially for the rimfire rifle. Also includes bases, rings, 325 rounds of .22LR ammunition and a hard gun case. Retail value \$634.00.





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For additional
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edmontoninfo@aheia.com

Calgary Conservation Education Centre for Excellence
911 Sylvester Crescent SW, Calgary, AB T2W 0R8
Phone 403.252.8474 or Toll Free 1.866.852.4342
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A.H.E.I.A.'s Mission is to Make Wildlife and Fish Part of the Value System of Every Albertan



AHEIA once again had the pleasure of welcoming visitors to its booths at this year's Calgary and Edmonton Boat and Sportsmen's Shows.







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Since 1985, Wildlife Habitat Canada, a national, non-profit, charitable conservation organization, has invested over \$50 million to support hundreds of conservation projects on private and public lands across Canada, through its granting program. Wildlife Habitat Canada works through partnerships with communities, landowners, governments, non-government organizations, and industry to conserve, enhance, and restore wildlife habitat. To learn more about the projects that Wildlife Habitat Canada has funded or to see our annual report, please visit www.whc.org.

Without habitat ... there is no wildlife. It's that simple!

Making Wildlife and Fish Part of the Value System of all Albertans.



Mentored Hunt Program in Southern Alberta

By Dave Paplawski



Dave Paplawski
Vice President &
Provincial Program
Coordinator
A.H.E.I.A.

Any successful Mentored Hunting Program requires two components for long term success: knowledgeable safe mentors and a good area to hunt. In an area south of Lethbridge in WMU 108, AHEIA has been blessed to partner with the Deseret Ranches of Alberta to have a prime hunting location for an antlerless deer hunt.

The Deseret Ranch is located in prime deer habitat on the Milk River Ridge, just south of Raymond. The mentored hunt program was started on the ranch property in 2002, and during the first few years each hunter was mentored by a person designated by the ranch manager. Since 2008, AHEIA has identified and certified a number of mentors from the Lethbridge area who now take the new hunters on the ranch for their first time hunting experience. In 2016, the Ranch built a number of permanent blinds on ranch property and placed them in prime locations. Fifty-three first time hunters have had their first experience hunting deer on the ranch since the program started. Each year, 10 first time hunters are taken on the ranch by a certified AHEIA mentor.

Back in the early stages of AHEIA's mentorship program, an Instructor from the Conservation Enforcement Program at Lethbridge College contacted AHEIA with a concern he had with some of the students enrolled in the program to become Conservation Officers. A few of them had very little or no hunting experience, but were looking for opportunities to hunt in southern Alberta while attending college for four years.

With the support of the college, the Conservation Enforcement Students Club has partnered with AHEIA to provide many new conservation officers a great first time hunt for deer and many have shot their first deer on the Deseret Ranch.

If anyone would like to participate as mentors or identify potential first time hunters to participate in a hunt in Southern Alberta, contact Allan Orr (allan@aheia.com) or Dave Paplawski (dave@aheia.com).



SURVIVAL IS IN OUR CROSSHAIRS



CON CAPIT

DID YOU KNOW:

- that it takes an annual operating budget of approximately \$4.3 million to deliver all facets of Conservation Education to approximately 100,000 Albertans annually?
- that every cent of every dollar that is donated goes into Conservation Education program delivery?
- that the annual printing budget of AHEIA for all program areas, including manuals, tests, certificates, etc. represents in excess of \$400,000?
- the annual premiums to secure liability insurance of \$5,000,000 and all other necessary insurance for equipment, facilities and vehicles for AHEIA and every instructor and participant exceeds \$150,000.
- the annual cost of correspondence to members of AHEIA is approximately \$150,000.
- the annual cost for the purchase and repair of training aids and equipment is approximately \$400,000.
- the cost of the one week long Outdoor Women's Program, including three meals and one snack per day, is approximately \$130,000 or \$550 per participant.
- the cost of running one of our Youth Seminars for 150 youths exceeds \$70,000.
- the cost of running one of our Youth Camps for 50 youths for five days, including three meals and one snack per day, is approximately \$1000 per participant or \$50,000.
- the cost of running a one day Outdoor Wildlife Learning (O.W.L. Days) program for 150 youths is approximately \$120 per child or \$18,000.
- the cost of one instructional techniques workshop for 20 instructors for 20 hours is approximately \$1,500 per participant or \$30,000.
- AHEIA does not charge fees on a cost recovery basis for their programs, and survives by donations!

PLEASE CONSIDER

CONSERVATION EDUCATION FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

FACT:

Our programs survive by donation.

FACT:

Economic woes affect us all, especially the charities.

FACT:

Incomes are down nearly 50%
and operating costs are increasing.

FACT:

Our goal is to continue excellent program delivery,
not to cut services or courses.

FACT:

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

In 2016 our programs will reach over 100,000 men, women, and children
of all ages and our projections for 2017 are to reach an even larger audience.

Our fundraising efforts are being supplemented with a new
fundraising campaign to appeal to those we serve.

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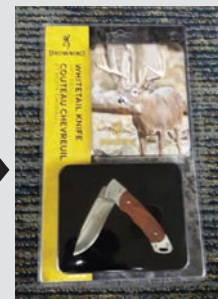
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Great Meals

from the

Harvest

with Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
AHEIA Red Deer - North

Maple Salmon

1 pound salmon fillet	1/4 cup genuine maple syrup
2 teaspoons soy sauce	1 clove garlic (finely minced)
1/4 teaspoon onion powder	1/4 teaspoon garlic salt
1/8 teaspoon fresh ground pepper	1/4 cup parsley (finely chopped)
Lemon wedges	Dash of hot sauce

In a small bowl mix the maple syrup, soy sauce, minced garlic, garlic salt, onion powder, hot sauce and pepper.

Place the salmon fillet in a shallow glass baking dish and coat with the maple syrup mixture. Cover the dish with plastic wrap and allow salmon to marinate in the refrigerator for 30 minutes, turning once.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Place the baking dish in the preheated oven and bake the salmon uncovered for 20 minutes until it flakes easily with a fork. Do not overcook.

Sprinkle with parsley and add lemon wedges. Serve with steamed rice, your favourite vegetable and a good Riesling wine. Give the Rosemount Estate Traminer Riesling VNS a try; it is one of my favourites.

Venison Hamburger Steak with Onions and Gravy

1 pound ground venison	1/8 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 large egg	1/2 teaspoon seasoned salt
1/4 cup bread crumbs	1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/8 teaspoon fresh ground pepper	1/2 teaspoon onion powder
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce	1 tablespoon canola oil
1 cup onions (thinly sliced)	2 tablespoons flour
1 cup good quality beef broth	1 tablespoon cooking sherry

In a large bowl, mix together the ground venison (you can substitute any wild game meat), egg, bread crumbs, pepper, salt, onion powder, garlic powder, pepper flakes and Worcestershire sauce. Form into 8 patties and set aside.

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat.

Fry the patties and onions together until the patties are nicely browned on both sides and juices run clear (about 4 minutes/side). Set aside and keep the patties warm.

Leave onions in skillet over medium heat and sprinkle the flour over the onions. Stir the mixture well and make sure you scrape up all the bits left over from the frying process; this adds lots of flavour. Gradually mix in the beef broth and sherry. Season with seasoned salt and simmer over medium-low heat for 5 minutes, until the gravy thickens.

Turn the heat to low, return the patties to the gravy, cover and simmer for another 15 minutes. Serve with mashed potatoes, creamed corn (or other veggie) and a rustic bread.



Conservation Education Points of Contact

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1-866-852-4342
Fax: 403-252-3770
info@aheia.com

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Phone: 780-466-6682
1-866-282-4342
Fax: 780-431-2871
edmontoninfo@aheia.com

Alford Lake Conservation Education Centre For Excellence

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Phone: 403-722-2423
Fax: 403-722-2445
alfordlake@xplornet.com

A.H.E.I.A. Calgary Firearms Centre

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1st Annual SPRING GUN SALE

**SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2017
@ 1:00 PM**

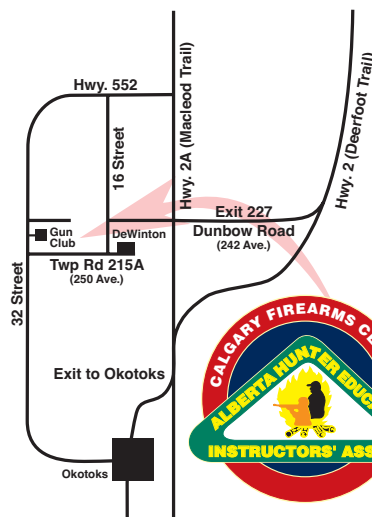
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DIRECTIONS TO CALGARY FIREARMS CENTRE: From the North, on Deerfoot Trail, exit on 227, go across Hwy. 2A and follow the signs. From the South, on Deerfoot or Macleod Trail, exit onto Hwy. 2A (Macleod Trail), then onto Dunbow Road West and follow the signs.



“I think she is hooked for life and I have a new hunting partner.”

Makenzie's First Deer

By Kevin Gaal

Gentlemen:

I have to apologize that I haven't written sooner! But I would like to let you know how your rifle is making out.

As you know, Makenzie was given a gift from Bruce and Terry Strand last February. They had won the Browning "Ladies" 270 WSM at the 2016 AHEIA banquet and were so gracious to give that rifle to Makenzie. It is a gift that will last her a lifetime, and both her and I are very lucky to call the Strands our friends. It just goes to show you how thoughtful they are to think of Makenzie after winning the rifle.

Makenzie had taken the AHEIA course a couple of years ago and gotten her PAL as well. She was determined to one day go hunting on her own terms.

I bought her a Leupold scope for the rifle, and her grandfather Louis bought her the reloading dies and components for the 270 WSM.

It was off to sight it in. I got it on paper and what I thought was zero, and it was Makenzie's turn. One shot from prone at 100m and she hit 2" high and dead centre.

I laughed out loud, and when she looked in the spotting scope she said, "Well, that's good enough for me."

She has never shot a larger calibre rifle before, but has spent many days out shooting gophers with me and she has her own .22 now. I have taken her on numerous successful deer and elk hunts and purchased good equipment for her, so that if she ever wanted to go hunting, she would be all set up. She even has her own set of Leica 10x40 binos that I am not allowed to use!



“I could tell from the deer's actions and that sound of a solid hit that she had just shot her first deer.”



We went out elk hunting on opening day, and though we never even saw an elk, we had a great day out together.

She is a natural with the rifle, as the one picture here shows.

November 14 was her first day out for her own deer. She went to Canadian Tire and bought her own tag, and met me an hour before day break.

She walked enough to get blisters on her feet, but turned down some small bucks. She said I have set the bar pretty high for her. Being at Bruce's shop to see the deer he mounts, and the deer her grandfather and I have, I guess has wrecked her for being normal!

November 15 she asked if we could sit in the warm truck and maybe "just glass" for a bit.

I said, "You know that's not how it's done", but she said her feet were sore. Eventually, though, she pulled on a set of cowboy boots and we headed out an hour before first light.

We approached an old slough bottom and I was watching three WT does. She spotted a small fork horn WT, and we decided to just sit and see what's around. We spotted three other WT bucks and got a bit closer for a look. The group was approximately 400m out and no cover between us.

We talked about the distance and where to aim. She said she felt good and steady with her shooting sticks. We talked about her breathing and staying calm and I said, "I guess if you want to try", then BANG!

I was watching in the binos and the other two smaller bucks took off.

I started to laugh and she said, "What?"

I said, "Oh, he's not doing very well," as I watched him walk over the hill. I could tell from the deer's actions and that sound of a solid hit that she had just shot her first deer.

We walked over to the last spot where we had seen him, and found what the pictures show.

I was so proud of her. Her first deer and it's a bit of a freak too. She loves it, as you can see by her smile. The right beam splits and had grown a second main beam. It's pretty impressive.

She called her grandfather to bring the quad and a camera. A rangefinder later determined the distance at 387m. A one shot kill.

I think she is hooked for life and I have a new hunting partner.

We took the deer to Bruce's to give him the cape, and in true form, Bruce offered to mount the deer for her as yet another gift to her. She said she will wait until she gets something bigger ... Good God, what have I created! She wants to go sheep hunting now.

So, thank you all so very much from both Mackenzie and I. We hope you enjoy the pictures as much as we enjoyed being out there and making those memories.

Regards and thank you for everything.



Mackenzie and Kevin Gaal

" Her first deer and it's a bit of freak too ...
The right beam splits and had grown a second main beam.
It's pretty impressive. "



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For more information contact dave@aeia.com
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Glenn McKay
Firearms Education
Coordinator
AHEIA

Crossing over the Bow River three weeks ago, I saw three hardy characters up to their thighs in water, chucking flies at the edge of a riffle. A week later, the same body of water was locked up in ice!

At the February Calgary Boat and Sportsmen's Show, I had a chance to talk with my sources on who has been out fishing and what they were using as bait. Although this is more like a very carefully planned interrogation, I did learn that my sources were still actively involved in hiding the information that I required ... a very seasonal game which anglers play. Finding a good spot on their favourite piece of water, learning what the fish are taking, and then keeping it to themselves.

So when I received the new 2017 sport fishing regulations, I could get on with my spring rituals. Primarily, I look for any changes in the regulations that deal with the waters that I fish. Based on what I find, I can now start going through my equipment to make sure all is in order and all still legal.

By going through my fly boxes, I found I was low in numbers of my favourite flies, but still plenty to head out and see if they are still working. It also gave me a chance to (although not a legal requirement) flatten the barbs of the hooks that work well. I do this, as it makes it somewhat easier to release fish that I cannot keep.

The next step is to examine the fly rods to make sure all is in order with them. Checking the guides, reel seat and tip to make sure the first trip out is not a frustrating and avoidable experience. Next is the reel/line combination. Although they were cleaned and oiled before I put them away, it gives me a chance to run my hands over the line(s) to feel for cracks or holes.

With the equipment all looked after, I now have time for the best part of the season, that is checking with the landowners who I have come to know, for access to my favourite pieces of water. It is always a treat to talk to the landowners, as you learn so much by listening! It is a great time of the year, and now I can head to a licence dealer and pick up my sport fishing licence and plan my first trip!

If you like planning your trips, you might be interested in our 2017 AHEIA Fly Fishing Adventure raffle. It is a \$5 ticket which gives you a chance at a one day trip for two to fish with outfitter Don Jensen of Wildlife West Adventures on the Elk River (British Columbia). To add to the trip, you receive a great fly fishing equipment package which includes rod, reel, a sling pack, net and many other items to make it a ready-to-go package. The package will be drawn on May 19, 2017, so give us a call or email to get your tickets!

Enjoy the season, and if you get a chance, take a beginner with you.



Looking Forward *to* Spring



**I am not sure about you,
but I am done with winter.**





Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
AHEIA
Red Deer - North

One of my favourite meals is fish. Nothing beats a fresh, boneless walleye fillet that has been properly handled and processed.

There are a variety of methods one can use to clean walleye. The following method works well for me, and with a few simple steps and a little practice, you can also reap the rewards.

Let's discuss the proper equipment for the job. A good quality, sharp, flexible fillet knife is an essential tool to get the job done properly. Depending on the size of the fish, a 6"-9" knife will do the job nicely. You can find good quality knives from Rapala, Buck, Havalon, Berkley, Grohmann and others. I recommend that you also pick up a simple knife sharpener and a steel to keep your knife razor sharp. There are also electric knives available from Berkley and Rapala, etc., should you choose that option. It also pays to have a flat surface to work on, and I recommend a polyethylene or wood cutting board.

To begin, since I am right-handed, I place the walleye on the cutting board with the head facing away from me and the belly on the right. Next, I place the tip of the knife into the anal vent and cut/slice towards the head. Slice between the pelvic fins and the gill. Keep the knife blade shallow so you don't puncture the intestines.

Next, keeping your blade inside the body, turn it so it is facing up and angle your knife behind the tail side of the pelvic and pectoral fins. Slice through the skin, coming out on the top of the spine. By doing it this way, rather than cutting through the scales, you keep your knife sharp longer, but either way works.

Now lay your blade flat along the backbone and slice towards the tail, removing the fillet (figure 1). You will be cutting through some bones at this time. Your fillet will have the skin, rib bones and ridge bones remaining. Not to worry, you will be removing them on the next steps. Repeat the process for the second fillet (figure 2). You will be left with the head-attached car-

cass. Prior to disposing of it, do not forget to take out the walleye cheeks. They can be easily removed and skinned with your fillet knife. They make a very tasty little treat.

The rib bones can now be removed by placing your blade at the edge of the rib cage. Keep the edge of your knife close to the rib cage so you don't waste any meat. Once the initial cuts are completed, you can usually grab the ribcage and pull it out (figure 3).

The ridge bones can now be removed (figure 4). They run along the centre of the fillet, near the lateral line and towards the front/head of the fillet. I like to take the blade of my knife and gently scrape it along the top of the ridge bones. This makes it easy to locate them. Cut through the fillet on both sides of the ridge bones and take the boney strip out. The ridge bones are only found on the front part of the fillet and not in the tail portion. Repeat the process for the other fillet.

"Nothing beats a fresh, boneless walleye fillet that has been properly handled and processed."

Filleting Walleye



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Now we can remove the skin (figure 5). I have a tendency to do this last as it helps in keeping everything tied together during the process. Hold the thin tail end of the fillet with your fingernail and cut down tight along the skin. Hold the end of the skin with one hand while you slide your knife forward, keeping your blade tight to the skin. I tend to hold the knife stationary while I slide the skin backwards in a scraping motion. You do not want to waste any meat.

You now have boneless fillets (figure 6). I recommend that you rinse them with cold water and pat dry with a paper towel. You are now ready to feast on your bounty. Sometimes the process seems a little intimidating, but not to worry, you can do it.

This process will also work for both yellow perch and sauger.





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“Unfortunately, there is nothing definitive to say about how long the disease has been in Alberta, how it got here in the first place, or if it has spread outside of the Bow River watershed since its arrival.”

Whirling Disease

By Sarah Long



Sarah Long
Assistant Conservation
Education Coordinator
AHEIA Red Deer - North

Despite having impacted mostly hatchery-raised North American trout for decades, I'm sure many Albertan anglers have only recently heard about whirling disease. As soon as I heard the name whirling disease, my mind went into a series of questions. I wondered: What is it? What does it do? Can I catch it?

Wanting answers to these questions and others, I began to dig around for the truth.

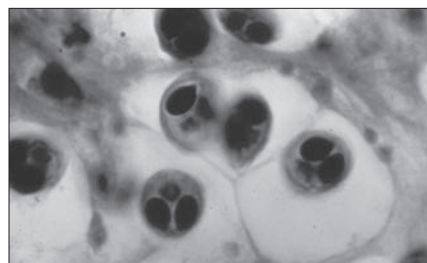
First of all, what is whirling disease? It turns out a microscopic parasite called *Myxobolus cerebralis* causes whirling disease. This parasite originated in Europe and has made its way to North America through the transport of infected brown trout. It landed in Pennsylvania in 1957 and has been making its way through waterways across the United States ever since. It was detected in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming in the mid to late 1990s, so it was probably only a matter of time before *Myxobolus cerebralis* found its way here.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) first confirmed whirling disease on August 23, 2016, for several infected fish taken from Johnson Lake in Banff National Park. The CFIA issued a declaration that whirling disease had been confirmed in Johnson Lake and has since extended that declaration to include the Bow River watershed. There is much speculation about what whirling disease means for this world-class fishery, but in any case, the news is not good. Unfortunately, there is nothing definitive to say about how long the disease has been in Alberta, how it got here in the first place, or if it has spread outside of the Bow River watershed since its arrival.

The parasite affects salmonid fishes, which in Alberta includes all trout and whitefish species. Young fish are most susceptible to this disease, with mortality rates reaching as high as 90% for that life stage. There is currently no cure or treatment for this disease, which is why it is so important to stop it from spreading into different water bodies and watersheds. Now knowing where whirling disease is in Alberta, which fish it affects, and that there is no treatment, I moved on to my next big question. How can I tell if a fish has whirling disease? There are a few visible symptoms which may indicate that a fish is infected with whirling disease. These symptoms include:

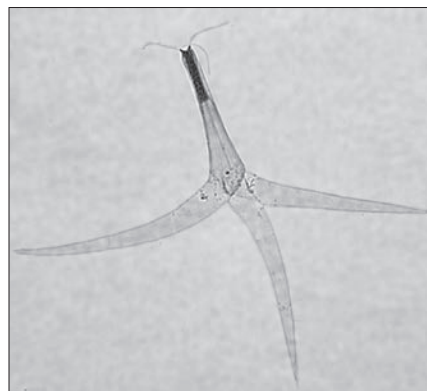
- a dark to almost black tail;
- head or spinal deformities; and
- swimming in a “whirling” pattern.

Not all contaminated fish show signs of infection, and the severity of the symptoms can depend on the age and size of the fish.



Myxobolus cerebralis during myxospore stage.

Photo Credit: <http://en.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enwiki/893234>



Myxobolus cerebralis
during Triactinomyxon (TAM) spore stage.

Photo Credit: <http://microbiology.science.oregonstate.edu/aahl/research>



Tubifex worm.

Photo Credit: <http://www.marlin.ac.uk/species/detail/1860>

The organism that causes whirling disease is a specialized two-host parasite. It starts as myxospores that are found in or on the sediment in our lakes, rivers and streams. The myxospores first need a species of freshwater worm known as *Tubifex* as a host. Within the tubifex worm, the myxospores develop into triactinomyxon (also called TAMs). These TAMs are released from the worms into the water and then attach to the skin of salmonid fish as the final host. When the fish that are infected by whirling disease die, the myxospores that were formed in their body during the infection are released back into the sediment, and the cycle starts again. The whole lifecycle involves only the myxospores, tubifex worms and salmonid fishes. Other fish, waterfowl, dogs, cats and humans cannot be infected with whirling disease. I was happy learning this, as it answered my last question: Can I catch whirling disease?

Although the Bow River watershed and its fish are infected, whirling disease is not spread directly between fish. The parasite can be spread to other areas by transporting either water or sediment containing myxospores, tubifex worms and infected live or dead fish. So, we need to take precautions to keep the whirling disease outbreak contained and stop it from spreading. A few ways to help fight the spread are:

Use the **Clean, Drain and Dry** philosophy.

- Clean and inspect all equipment that has come into contact with the water. This includes boats, motors, waders, containers, etc. Scrub, rinse or pressure wash boats and equipment (away from drains, waterways or ditches). The use of hot water and disinfectants is recommended, if possible.
- Drain boats, coolers and any other places that may have collected water.
- Dry all the equipment thoroughly before entering another water body. Drying in full sunlight is best because UV light will help to degrade spores.

Other helpful tips:

- Place fish waste in an on-site garbage bin after cleaning.
- Don't move live or dead fish, or fish parts to other water bodies. (This is illegal in Alberta.)
- Tell others about whirling disease and how to stop the spread.

If you, or someone you know, is an avid angler and will be visiting multiple waterbodies in each season, it may be advantageous to have a few sets of boots or waders for the different areas to

which you go. When you are finished fishing for the day, put your cleaned boots and waders in a sealed, labelled bin and they are ready for your next trip. It might be a bit pricey and may take a little more work, but it would go such a long way to keeping this parasite from spreading. At the very least, avoid the use of felt waders and other porous materials that can capture myxobolus spores and prevent these parasites from being sufficiently dried.

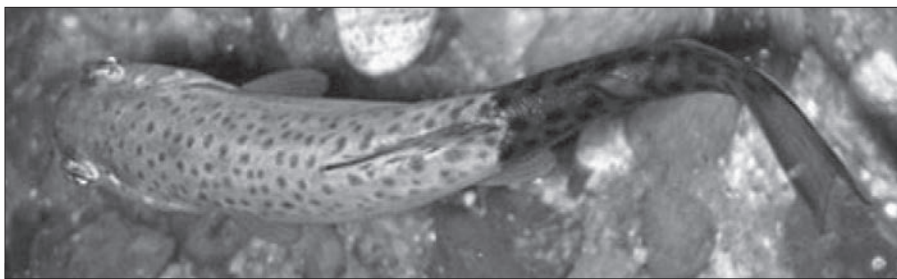
If you suspect a fish or a waterbody of being infected with whirling disease, it must be reported to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. They can be reached at 587-230-2200 (or www.inspection.gc.ca).

I am hoping this information gets shared to raise awareness of the organisms involved in whirling disease, as well as the steps we can take as outdoorsmen to interrupt the life cycle of the parasite.



Head and spinal deformities on Rainbow Trout fry.

Photo Credit: http://www.wataugademocrat.com/news/whirling-disease-gill-lice-found-in-watauga-trout/article_3317b9b-c02b-5ae7-9904-d55c6897010f.html



Blackened tail on Rainbow Trout.

Photo Credit: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/whirling-disease-banff-montana-1.3737083> (Originally from fishpathogens.net)



Spinal deformity on a Rainbow Trout.

Photo Credit: <https://aquaculturedirectory.co.uk/first-case-of-whirling-disease-in-canada/>

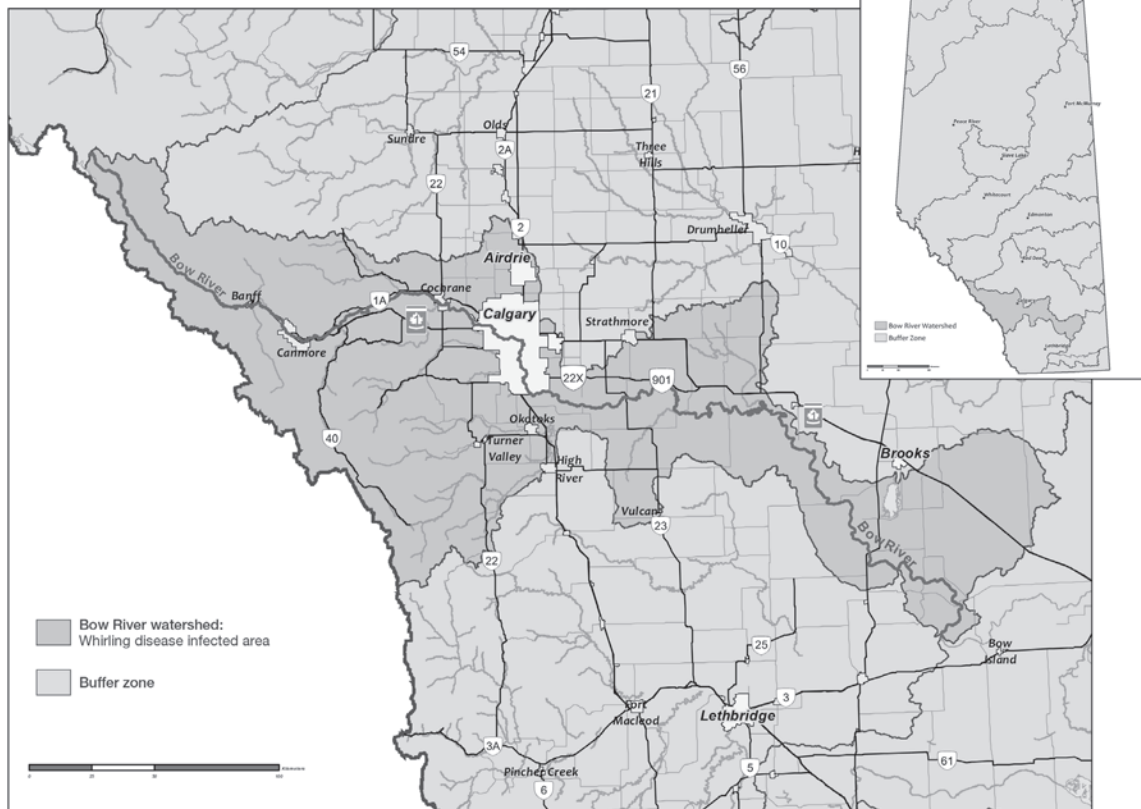
“ We need to take precautions to keep the whirling disease outbreak contained and stop it from spreading. ”



More information on Whirling Disease on the following pages ➤



WHERE IS WHIRLING DISEASE IN ALBERTA?



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**CLEAN + DRAIN + DRY
YOUR GEAR**



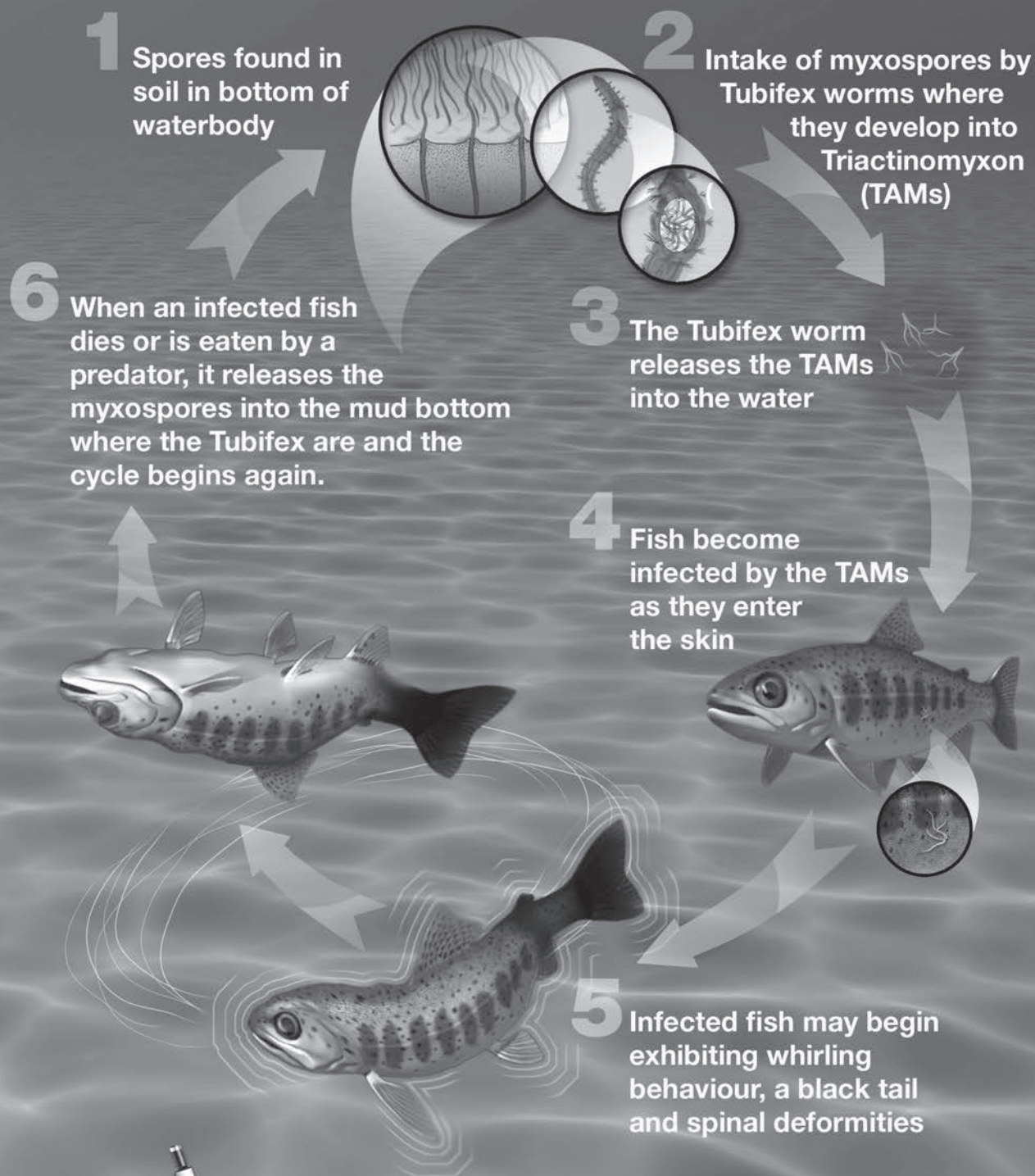
Whirling disease causes mortality and deformities in salmonid fish including trout and whitefish. The first case of whirling disease in Canada was confirmed in August 2016 in Johnson Lake, Banff National Park, Alberta. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has declared the Bow River watershed "infected" with whirling disease and the remaining areas in the province of Alberta as a "buffer zone". This is effective as of February 10, 2017. Provincial monitoring is ongoing.

STOP THE SPREAD
CLEAN, DRAIN, DRY all equipment that has been in contact with water.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES, CALL:
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Whirling Disease Life Cycle



Fish are tested for whirling disease by examining the fish cartilage for myxospores.



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