



Alberta Hunter Education
Instructors' Association

Winter 2014

Conservation Education

The Voice of Conservation Education in Alberta

Magazine



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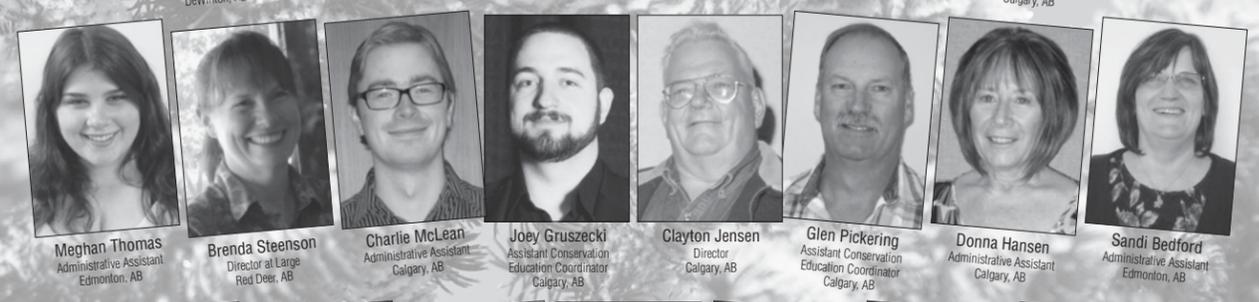
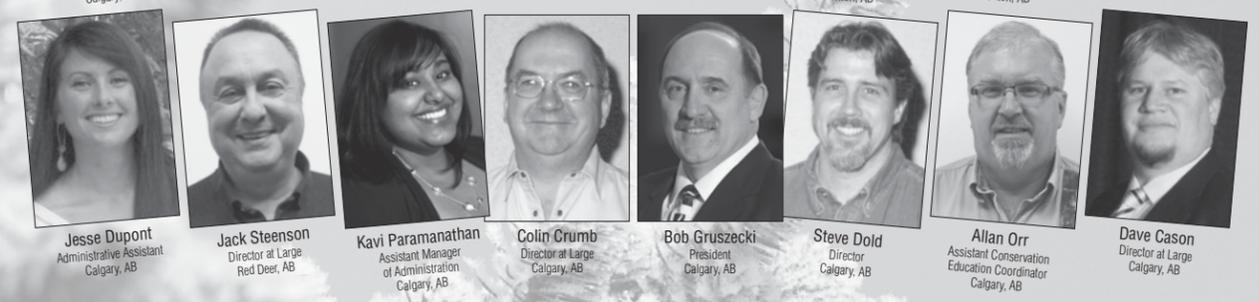


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Merry Christmas

and all the very best for a
happy and healthy New Year

from the
**Staff & Directors
of A.H.E.I.A.**

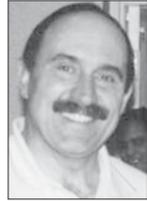


President's Message



"... our organization has become a well known authority in all facets of conservation education ..."

By Robert A. Gruszecki



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

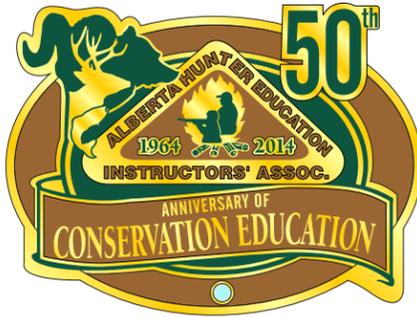
As we look back on 2014, it is my pleasure to reflect with you on this, our 50th year in Conservation Education. It is with great pleasure that we are able to report another successful year of reaching even more people with our mission:

"To make wildlife and wild places part of the value system of every Albertan!"

This past year we created a Quarter Century club to honour volunteer instructors who had 25 years or more of continuous service. 127 instructors contributed over 3200 years of dedication to the cause of Conservation Education. Our program has developed to what it is on the backs of these tremendous volunteers! Our team of 3200 members and volunteers do the much needed work to ensure our programs continue to be offered to Albertans — men, women and children of all ages. We are reminded, at this time of year especially, what a true gift our volunteers are!



In 2014, over 85,000 Albertans partook of our diverse program offerings. As we enjoy a resurgence of interest in these ancient enterprises, men, women and children of all ages have become part of our growing community of conservation-minded outdoor enthusiasts. Our students and members continue to be exposed to the important messages of Conservation Education. Province wide, over 36,000 students participated in the Canadian Firearms Safety Courses and another 15,000 attended the Hunter Education classes with even more enrolling for our online courses every day. This past year our National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) reached in excess of 8500 students. This is clearly the fastest growing element of our program and we look forward to exciting things in 2015 and beyond. This program is now available in over 200 schools province wide and we have certified in excess of 550 teachers to date.



Thanks to our dedicated team of volunteers and staff at A.H.E.I.A., our delivery continues to grow and we are proud of our ongoing effort to make firearms education accessible to all Albertans. Our Conservation Education Centres for Excellence in Calgary and Edmonton offer ever more courses in hunting, fishing, bow hunting and firearms education each year, as well as a multitude of youth and women's specific programs. As many Albertans — citizens and corporations alike — will attest, our organization has become a well known authority in all facets of conservation education and this is proven by our busy course schedule and maximum attendance in all of our facilities. With continual improvements to our in class and online offerings, 2014 has seen much progress here at A.H.E.I.A. and we look forward to all 2015 will bring.

Building on our electronic program success, we launched the next in our online Essentials series, *Archery Essentials*, as well as the debut of the *Kid Wise Firearms Safety* program for children, featuring the

newest member of the A.H.E.I.A. family, 'Wisely the Owl'. Already these additions have had a significant impact and we are very excited to see where they will take us in 2015. Our social media interaction with the public continues to grow with over 1,800,000 hits to our website. Our Twitter, Facebook and Instagram feeds have an ever increasing number of followers.

The Alford Lake Conservation Education Centre for Excellence was visited by nearly 10,000 people from various groups including grade schools, post-secondary institutions, cadet groups, youth scout/guide troops, Native groups, and special interest groups who spent many hours indulging in great outdoor learning activities. Alford Lake is also home to numerous instructor and teacher workshops, certification courses, youth seminars, survival camps, wildlife and specialty seminars for various government agencies and a variety of interest groups. This past year we also hosted the 21st annual Outdoor Women's Program.

The Calgary Firearms Centre hosted 12 competitive shoots, various corporate functions and private events, several of which allowed us to help the next generation of shooters experience the excitement of the various



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ARCHERY ESSENTIALS

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President's Message *cont.*

shotgun sports. Additionally, we have continued to invite students from the Conservation Education Courses to the centre to enjoy a day of safe shooting instruction and these days have helped us add to our membership. We were also fortunate to host the Provincial Trapshooting Championships this past summer, which was incredibly successful for both participants and staff. In excess of 10,000 people visited this centre this past year which makes it one of the busiest centres of its kind in North America.

As the 13th Annual W.I.S.E. Conservation Awards and Banquet approaches, held at the BMO Centre at Stampede Park on Saturday, February 7, 2015, we look forward to honoring dedicated Albertans for their contributions in conserving Alberta's wilderness resources and for sharing their love of the outdoors with others

through superior education. This event serves as an opportunity to profile Conservation Excellence and allows us an opportunity to shine a spotlight on Conservation Education heroes. We invite you to consider those worthy in your community and nominate them for this year's prestigious awards. This special evening also serves as one of A.H.E.I.A.'s primary fundraising events.

This year's Banquet and AGM is set to be yet another great celebration of our connection to wildlife and wild places. A.H.E.I.A., W.I.S.E. and Conservation Education will once again recognize outstanding Albertans with awards as well as gather to celebrate our cause and join in fellowship. Your support through attendance and participation at the W.I.S.E. Banquet is of utmost importance to our cause and we look forward to seeing you there.

As another successful year ends, we think about all we are grateful for. Our role in Conservation

Education and our relationship with each of you who help us deliver these programs are things we treasure. On behalf of all of us at A.H.E.I.A., thank you for the pleasure of working with you. On behalf of the 85,000+ men, women and children that our collective efforts reach, Thank You for your commitment to this cause.

On behalf of my entire family, we wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year that fills your hearts with joy! All the best in all your endeavours for 2015.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Gruszecki

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Conservation Education Magazine

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Cover Photo by:

Kirby England B.Sc.
Riparian Resource Analyst, Cows and Fish
Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society

■ See page 29 for more on this month's cover photo

The Conservation Education
W.I.S.E. Foundation and
Alberta Hunter Education
Instructors' Association
are pleased to present the



13th Annual W.I.S.E. Awards & Banquet

**Saturday
February 7, 2015**

**BMO Centre
Stampede Park
Calgary, Alberta**

**Tickets \$115.00 each,
\$870.00 for a table of 8
or \$1100 for a table of 10.**

**Silent Auction &
Cocktails 4:30 pm**

Dinner 6:00 pm

**Awards Program &
Live Auction to follow**

Contact info@aheia.com or telephone

1.866.852.4342



**A.H.E.I.A.'s Mission:
To make Wildlife and Fish
part of the Value System
of Every Albertan.**



Photo courtesy of Don Kesler Nature Photography



W.I.S.E. Award Nominations Recognize Conservation Excellence

Nominations for the 2015 W.I.S.E. Awards are now being accepted.

Initiated 12 years ago, the W.I.S.E. Awards recognize outstanding achievement and commitment in the area of Conservation Education and Resource Management.

The Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association and the Conservation Education W.I.S.E. Foundation created the W.I.S.E. Awards. Both of these charitable foundations exist solely for the purpose of helping Albertans learn about Alberta's wildlife and the contribution that wildlife makes to the quality of our lives in Alberta. The goal is to make wildlife and fish part of the value system of all Albertans.

Three W.I.S.E. Award recipients will be chosen from the following four categories:

- W.I.S.E. Public Service Conservation Award
- W.I.S.E. Industry Conservation Award
- W.I.S.E. Volunteer Instructor Conservation Award
- W.I.S.E. Alva Bair Memorial Award

The awards will be presented at the A.H.E.I.A. banquet and fundraising auction held February 7, 2015, in the BMO Centre, Palomino Room, Stampede Park, Calgary, Alberta.

Please have your W.I.S.E. Award Nominations in as soon as possible for consideration.

For more W.I.S.E. Conservation Awards information and nomination forms visit the A.H.E.I.A. website at www.aheia.com or call 1-866-852-4342.

Conservation Awards Nomination Form

- Public Service Conservation Award Industry Conservation Award
 Volunteer Instructor Conservation Award Alva Bair Memorial Award

Include with your nomination, details as to why your nominee should be selected, based on the general criteria listed for each award description.

Name of Nominee: _____

P.O. or Street Address: _____

Town or City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Nominated By: _____ Signature: _____

Phone Number: _____ Date: _____

Please submit completed nomination form to:
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association (A.H.E.I.A.)
911 Sylvester Crescent S.W., Calgary, AB T2W 0R8
(403) 252-8474 or 1-866-852-4342
E-mail: info@aheia.com

Submissions may be forwarded by mail or e-mail, or you may access this form electronically by visiting our website. Be sure to include all supporting materials.

Recognizing Conservation Excellence



The Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association

Our Mission:

*"To Make Wildlife and Fish Part of the
Value System of Every Albertan."*

Working Principles & Elements of A.H.E.I.A.'s Conservation Education Programs:

- Wildlife is part of the value system of every Albertan.
- Wildlife contributes to the quality of the lives of Albertans.
- Human activity impacts wildlife.
- The behaviour of each person is important to the future of wildlife.
- Conservation Education is people helping other people to understand the needs and value of wildlife.
- Conservation Education is people enjoying wildlife and introducing other people to wildlife related activities.
- Conservation Education is people involved in wildlife education programs in formal and non-formal settings.
- Conservation Education is people advocating wildlife values to their communities.
- Conservation Education is people developing and sharing wildlife related skills.
- Conservation Education is people watching wildlife.

Edmonton Report



“ This group is some of the best I have ever had the privilege of working with. ”

By Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
A.H.E.I.A.
Red Deer - North

2014 has proven to be another very busy year at the Edmonton office.

I would be remiss if I did not give a special thank you to all of the volunteers and instructors who have helped out this year. This group is some of the best I have ever had the privilege of working with. Without their tireless commitment to the

A.H.E.I.A. cause, we would not be able to provide the level of excellence we currently provide to our students.

Having said that, we are still looking for more volunteer help in 2015. We have more firearms, hunter education, NASP, and I.B.E.P. courses

For volunteer opportunities with A.H.E.I.A.'s Edmonton office, please contact Ken Cook, Chuck Strong or Len Gransch at 1-866-282-4342 or email edmontoninfo@aheia.com

coming up. There are also the Youth Hunter Education Camps, Outdoor Youth Seminar and other youth camps that require assistance. We will also need help with the Edmonton Boat and Sportsmen's Show in March. The Spring Fling fundraising banquet will be held on June 4 and we could use assistance with this event as well.

If you are available, please contact Ken Cook, Chuck Strong or myself and we would be pleased to get the ball rolling.

When returning non-restricted or restricted disabled firearms kits, please do not include anything that was not originally in the kit. Also if there are any issues with the kit, please put a note inside the kit describing in detail what the problem(s) are.



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The Changing Face of Today's Shooter

Courtesy of Responsive Management

Shooting participation has been increasing in the United States, attracting new shooters who differ from established shooters. The increase in participation appears to have begun in 2008, when a surge in sales of firearms and ammunition, as well as increases in background checks for firearms, began. The sales and background check increases prompted a study to explore if such increases translated into an increase in shooting participation.

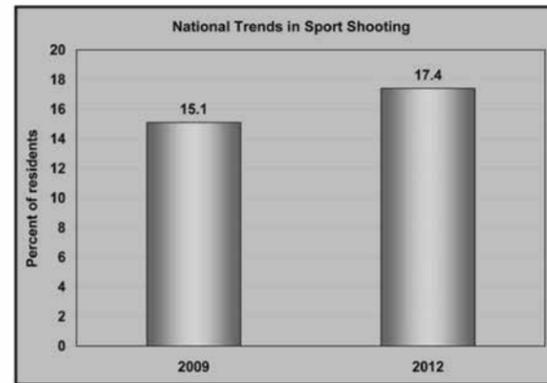
This study was conducted by Responsive Management for the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) to analyze sport shooting participation trends. The results of the study indicate increased shooting participation and a changing demographic profile among new shooters. "The landscape of target shooters has shifted, and this is data that everyone doing business in our industry should be aware of," said Chris Dolnick, NSSF Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer. "The results from this study have been particularly helpful to NSSF's more than 10,000 member businesses as we work together to meet the needs of these new customers."

Responsive Management's research found that, in 2012, 17.4% of the U.S. adult population, or an estimated 40,780,000 adults, participated in any type of target or sport shooting, which is an increase over the 15.1% rate among adult Americans in 2009 (see Graph 1). As well as that increase in overall target/sport shooting participation, there were increases in almost every individual shooting activity (see Graph 2), with the exception of shooting sporting clays.

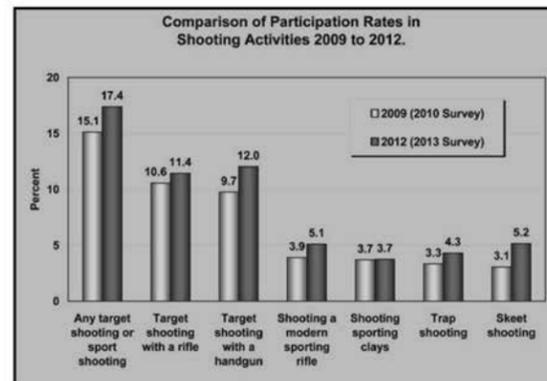
The study identified two components of the increase in participation: 1) an increase in participation or avidity among existing shooters, and 2) new shooters joining the sport. More than a third of established shooters are shooting more often: the study results showed that 35% of existing shooters describe their participation as having increased over the past five years. Shooting participation also enjoyed a substantial increase in newcomers to the sport: among all shooters who target or sport shot in 2012, a fifth of them (20%) started target/sport shooting within the past five years (see Graph 3), including 11% who first went target or sport shooting in 2012. These numbers represent a robust influx of new shooters.

The study also explored who these new shooters are. Newcomers are more likely to be younger, female and urban. Analysis of the data shows that new shooters are correlated with the following demographic factors: being 18 to 34 years old, being female, not being a hunter, living on the urban side of the urban-rural continuum, and not shooting archery. Graph 4 shows these correlations. In the graph, 20% of all shooters are new shooters (the patterned bar); those groups above the bar are positively correlated with being a new shooter. For example, 31% of female target shooters are new shooters (compared to 17% of male target shooters being new shooters).

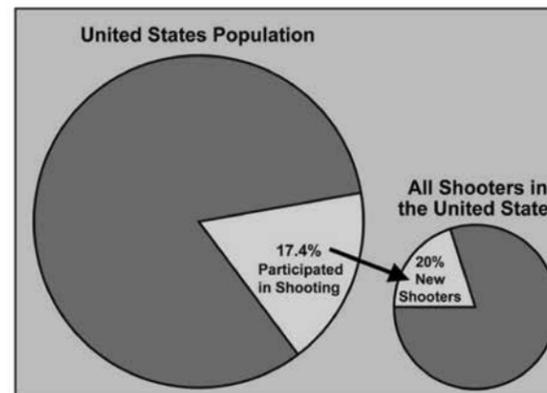
Responsive Management is an internationally recognized public opinion and attitude survey research firm specializing in natural resource and outdoor recreation issues. Our mission is to help natural resource and outdoor recreation agencies and organizations better understand and work with their constituents, customers, and the public.



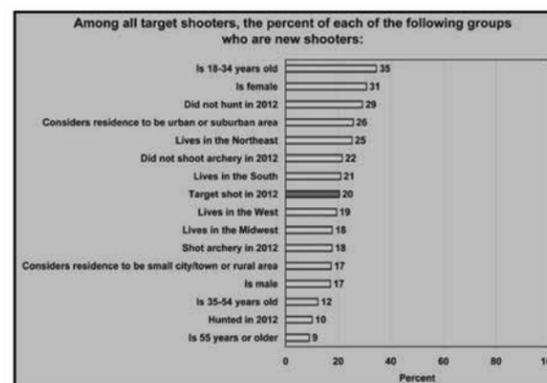
Graph 1



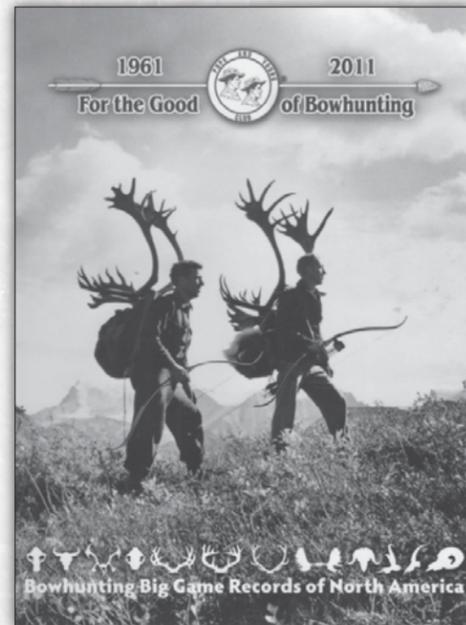
Graph 2



Graph 3



Graph 4



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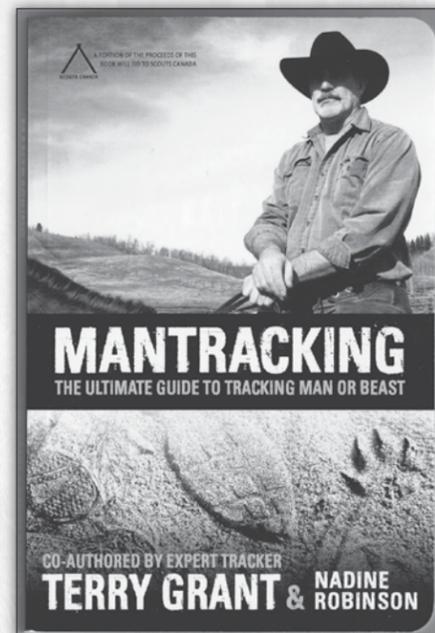
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Firearms Education Report

Survey Says...

By Glenn McKay



Glenn McKay
Firearms Education
Coordinator
A.H.E.I.A.

In July I was involved in a conversation with a student who was having a problem obtaining a hunting licence in his home province. During the conversation, I learned that the student obtained his PAL via a challenge in Alberta and the PAL was not being recognized as being adequate for a hunting licence. Apparently the student was told that he required his PAL to be obtained via a course and that he needed to show proof of course completion (a copy of his course report). It was also learned that in some provinces, the Hunter Education Course does not include a "firearms" compo-

nent, therefore they rely on the Canadian Firearms Safety Course to provide the handling portion for the "hunter" education class.

This prompted a request to all of the Alberta CFSC instructors to ask their students "why" they wanted to obtain their PAL. The reasons for the PAL included: hunting, sport shooting, inheritance, employment, being a collector, general firearms knowledge or other. The survey ended at the end of October and while

"While 52.8% wanted the PAL for hunting, a full 25% simply wanted the PAL to get into the shooting sports!"

the sample size was somewhat smaller than anticipated, the results did show an interesting trend. While 52.8 % wanted the PAL for hunting, a full 25% simply wanted the PAL to get into the shooting sports! 6.6% were going to inherit firearms, 3.8% wanted a PAL for work, .2% was for collecting firearms and a full 10% wanted firearms knowledge and the remainder for various other reasons. The question then became, does the current non-restricted course and practical exam for the course provide enough information for a person to go safely into the field with a firearm? I do not believe for a minute that this is all a person needs, but it does provide a decent baseline from which to start a long and enjoyable relationship with firearms.

I would like to thank all of the instructors in helping with the survey and I hope that I can count on you for any survey that will help our students and the hobby that all of us enjoy.

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First Time Pheasant Hunt

By Dave England

This year marked the fourth annual Taber Pheasant Festival. The festival is a joint effort between Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association, local Alberta Fish and Game Association clubs, MD of Taber, Town of Taber, Taber Heritage Inn, Pheasants Forever Calgary, Upland Birds Alberta, Taber and District Chamber of Commerce, as well as many local businesses and individuals. In 2014, nearly 700 individuals took part in the festival including 626 registered hunters and 50 novice hunters. An additional component of this year's festival was a raffle for four hunters to be coached by a knowledgeable mentor and accompanied by hunting dogs.

I purchased two raffle tickets to support the efforts of the festival organizers and wouldn't you know it, I won the hunt. Now, I have never hunted pheasants and I have never hunted with dogs, so this was a chance of a lifetime for me. I quickly contacted my son Kirby who lives in Lethbridge and asked him to find a couple of buddies that would like to join us on the hunt. He called back after a couple of days to say he



wasn't able to find anyone to come along so I contacted a couple of Fish and Wildlife officer buddies of mine (Henry Kujat (retired) and Jim Mitchell) who quickly jumped at the chance. At the same time, unknown to me, Kirby kept looking for two friends and found one (Kyle) who had experience in shooting trap but had never held a hunting licence and another (Jessica) who had hunted birds before but never pheasants. Kyle spent 11 hours on the A.H.E.I.A. web site taking the online Hunter Education course and both then purchased the required licences. That left me in a dilemma because now there were six of us ready for a hunt for four. I contacted our mentor, Jay Doolittle from Taber and asked if we could add two more people to the deal. He consulted with the ACA folks who were happy to add two more hunters to the pheasant hunt.

pheasants. Everyone managed to take at least one bird. We were all pretty tired after walking through rose bushes and other scrub brush for four hours so we called it a day.

I want to thank the organizers of the pheasant festival, as well as Jay, Ryan and AI for all their help as mentors and of course for the use of their three dogs that really made the day successful.

Kirby and I have already decided to make pheasant hunting an annual father/son event for us.

“ I have never hunted pheasants and I have never hunted with dogs, so this was a chance of a lifetime for me. ”



Left to right: Kyle, Kirby, Jay, Jim, Dave, Henry, and kneeling in front is Jessica.

Great Day for a Walk

“ The biggest reward was seeing the smiles on everyone’s faces, including the dogs! ”

By Glenn McKay



Glenn McKay
Firearms Education
Coordinator
A.H.E.I.A.

On October 18, I had a chance to participate in Stettler’s First Annual Pheasant Festival, not as a shooter, but as a Marshall for new hunters. Although this was not a new role for me, it provided a chance to deal with first time pheasant hunters who were planning an event of their own. Our designated area was near Big Valley, so we left at sunrise and almost immediately I noted mule deer, whitetails, ducks and geese along with a few “wild” pheasants along the road.

After making formal introductions to all of the hunters, the Marshalls and the most important working group, the dogs, the day began. Once we went over the ground rules and some shooting tips we were on the way. This was a group of

shooters who had not been involved in a shoot of this type and were often caught just watching the dogs and really enjoying the performance of our four legged partners. The first bird that was put up at the feet of the group found only one shot being fired and two shooters simply watching the bird fly away! When asked why only one shot, the hunters simply said that they thought the bird was gorgeous and didn’t want to spoil the sight! It was a treat to watch these men smile each and every time a bird was pointed and

“ It was decided that if given the chance, we would not have changed a thing! ”

shot at. Four hours had passed and the group returned to the trucks. Pictures were taken and after a healthy round of handshakes, they were on their way.

After a brief but extremely enjoyable lunch at the Big Valley Hotel, we travelled back to our area with another group of three new hunters. The same format was followed for the afternoon group and once again it turned out to be a very eventful afternoon. All shooters were successful and once again the dogs turned out to be the highlight of the day. They found all of the birds and sometimes they found the same birds more than once!

After the final handshake with the hunters, the handlers and Marshalls discussed the day, the hunters, the format and the dogs. It was decided that if given the chance, we would not have changed a thing! The biggest reward was seeing the smiles on everyone’s faces, including the dogs!! All I can hope for is an invite for next year’s event.



My Waterfowl Debut

“ Almost at once the decoys started doing their job and blue bills and golden eyes were splashing in on the lake in front of me ... I was having so much fun! ”

By Robert Depradines

It was a warm Sunday morning in late September. Jack and I had arranged to meet 30 minutes before sunrise, so we arrived around 6:00 am at the campground along the shore of Chip Lake.

I arrived with plenty of time to get my gear together and get my boots on. I had shut my engine off and Coral, Jack’s chocolate lab, greeted me with a groan and a wagging tail. I grabbed my Mossberg 500 and put my boots on in the back of the truck. I went over to the skiff and met up with Jack, shook hands and then we readied the vessel with gear, guns and lunch. Jack slipped the skiff into the water like he’d done, I’m sure, a thousand times before, took a couple of pictures with the iPhone and I jumped on board. We motored across the lake just as the sun was peeping over the horizon.

We reached a small island about ten minutes out on the lake, slowed to a stop and started setting out decoys of canvas backs, blue bills and a couple of Canada geese, just in case. This seemed very random to me, but I am sure there’s an art to it! I hopped ashore with the gear and Coral, as Jack took the skiff around the back of the 50 by 20 foot island into cover. Almost at once the decoys started doing their job and blue bills and golden eyes were splashing in on the lake in front of me.

We got set up in the nettles and then all seemed too cool. Jack went over the parameters of hunting waterfowl, mainly safety first, fun right after that! I was having so much fun!

Along the course of the next two hours, blue bills and golden eyes came in and let’s just say the creator was placing these diving ducks in my lap, but I couldn’t seem to put them down.

After some coaching and a little less buck fever, I dropped a Barrows golden eye off to my left about 20 feet up in the air! Coral was off with no hesitation and within 20 seconds she was back with a bird in mouth! What a rush! Jack congratulated me on a great shot and we inspected the bird; a young drake.

After that Jack had a sandwich and found the bananas. Now I didn’t know this, but it’s very bad luck to have bananas or monkeys for that matter, on a boat! You learn something new every day I guess!

After a few more downed birds it was time to pack up and head back. Jack jumped in the skiff and cruised the lake, looking for a couple of birds we thought had been wounded and retrieved the dead ones we had been keeping a beady eye on.

A solitary Canada goose flew over me at around 60 feet which was neat to see; however I didn’t take the shot. The skiff came back, another Kodak moment followed and we headed back to shore.

After sorting the gear and addressing the boat, trailer and quarry we had a few sandwiches and a pop. I had a fantastic time on the hunt. We harvested six ducks in total and I can’t wait to get out again sometime. It’s something I really would like to pursue.

We said our goodbyes; I expressed my thanks and promised not to pack bananas if we got a chance to hunt again together!

I can’t thank you great people enough for helping to set this hunt up. It’s a day I’ll never forget!



“ I can’t thank you great people enough for helping to set this hunt up. It’s a day I’ll never forget! ”



Pheasants Forever Calgary Chapter

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A Call For Your
Membership

What is a Trophy and Why are You a Hunter?

By Bob Gruszecki



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

Now that hunting season is largely behind us, as hunters we have time to reflect on the fruits of our labours. In my opinion, time for navel gazing is healthy from time to time.

Recently, in a discussion with outdoor enthusiasts, it was once again reinforced for me that there are varying

views on what one person considers a "trophy" or why people would even bother to hunt at all. Some people are loathe to harvest an animal because it doesn't fit his or her definition of a "trophy"; others wouldn't consider hunting at all. Where one person would consider harvesting a doe deer versus a Boone and Crockett buck to be a tremendous achievement or the successful conclusion to a pursuit, others may have a differ-

"... the question of what constitutes a trophy is ultimately a private issue.

It is ultimately for you to decide and absolutely no one else."



The author with a good elk. No more of a "trophy" than any of those shown here. You, and you alone, get to choose what your definition of a "trophy" is!



The author with an Alaskan Brown Bear.

ent yardstick by which they measure the success of their day, or perhaps more importantly, they would apply their "yardstick" to your actions and look down at you for your choice.

Today there is a great deal of pressure on the definition of a trophy or the "whys" of the hunt. Recent social media trends have vilified a Texas cheerleader, Kendal Jones, for choosing to hunt in Africa. This beautiful young woman and leader

in her community made a lawful and reasonable choice for herself. She never tried to make others do what she chose to do. She received death threats for shooting a lion. Is that right? Additionally, an NHL hockey player, David Booth of the Vancouver Canucks, was persecuted by the fan base and public for harvesting a bear and posting pictures on Facebook. Does that make sense??

A Colorado mother was recently cyber-bullied by animal rights activists after she posted a picture online of her posing with a mountain lion she had killed. She says she had never been called so many horrible, hateful names in her life. The antis and cyber bullies even went so far as to post her full name, address and directions to her house! CBS recently interviewed this woman and in the interview she said: "They were calling me horrible names. They were saying they wanted to kill me, they wanted to see me dead, they called me fat, they called me ugly, they called me the B-word ... There really wasn't anything they

"Man is a hunter/gatherer and at the core of our very existence is the tradition, the heritage and the culture of the hunt."



The author and wife Carla with a mule deer buck.



Young Joey Gruszecki with his first elk.

weren't willing to call me and say." How does this seem reasonable??? Today we seem more inclined to allow mass media, peer pressure, industry experts, anti-hunters and "famous faces" on TV or elsewhere, to determine for us what is considered to be a trophy or what should or should not be harvested.

The sickness isn't limited to the rage the anti's show as described above. It also extends into our very own user group. Hunters debate with other hunters by applying their values to others. One hunter may choose not to hunt a bear because he or she may not eat it. Whereas another hunter may choose a bear to pursue because of the personal challenge, the element of fear, the difficulty of acquiring such an animal, to preserve forever the memory of the pursuit and achievement in that hunter's eye.

The key here is that the question of what constitutes a trophy is ultimately a private issue. It is ultimately for you to decide and absolutely no one else! If your measurement of success is to harvest a bush bunny on a calm afternoon stroll or to harvest a mountain goat after many days' climb to the summit or a small buck deer that you rattled in — then so be it.

For some, the argument and fight within is based solely on the determination of whether or not the "trophy" is food. I submit to you that often times the harvest feeds more than one's belly. While in some cases it may fuel an ego, I would suggest that in most cases, in my experience, it



Young Dani Dickson with her first deer.

"Why you hunt is entirely up to you. In light of current pressures and societal opinion shifts you should really be able to answer for yourself at least why you hunt. Now that our season is over, it's a perfect time to reflect on such an important question and choice."

fuels a hunger to hunt for the pursuit itself. The harvest itself is often the natural conclusion and the demonstration of mankind's ability to exercise his/her dominion over the creation. The reduction to possession is often its testimonial which brings a true mix of emotion. Sometimes between pleasure and pain, but an emotion truly worth pursuing all the same. Man is a hunter/gatherer and at the core of our very existence is the tradition, the heritage and the culture of the hunt. Why do people pick flowers to bring home and press in a book to preserve forever versus seeing them and leaving them? I suspect

many hunters hunt for some of the reasons I do. One of those reasons is to fulfill a need to be a part of the natural world that observation alone cannot satisfy. Aldo Leopold, environmentalist and hunter, put it this way: "The instinct that finds delight in the sight and pursuit of game is bred into the very fibre of the race."

I submit to you that I am who I am, based on all things within my life's experience. I believe that, being a hunter, I have learned tenacity, patience, determination, concentration, self respect and a respect for life, a love of nature and understanding of the strug-

gle between life and death in nature, as well as a healthy understanding and commitment to the preservation of all species in nature, not just those I pursue. All of this I have learned in 50 years of hunting. I am proud that my background includes pursuit of wildlife. I am proud that I have fed my family with the flesh of game and clothed them with their skins and hides. I am proud that I have preserved the memory of the harvest, the day, the animal, my hunting pals, my mentors, the pursuit, the preparations, the follow up and more each and every time I bring a specimen home. My home is filled with what some call "trophies". Some would say that I have an "I'm great!" room. For me, these animals — furred, feathered and finned — that I surround myself with are memories. These are memories of times past, not a testimonial that "I am great". One day when I sit amongst these memories with my teeth in a glass beside me, my grandson on my knee and my pals, living and dead, sitting in my memory room, I will remember and revel further in this pride.

If someone labels me a "trophy hunter", then so be it. If being a self disciplined perfectionist seeking a single animal, perhaps an old patriarch well past its prime — maybe even a creature outcast from its own kind — then I guess his label fits me. If/when I am successful in pursuit of such a beast, I choose to enshrine this so called "trophy" in a place of honour in my memory room and he calls me a trophy hunter, then so be it. In my opinion, this is a much more noble and fitting end than letting it die on some lost and lonely ledge where birds of prey and other scavengers pick its dead white bones and its magnificent hide, horns or antlers weather away and are lost forever! Most wild animals don't pass away in comfort, sedated by a veterinarian's medication. Usually, they die a violent, agonizing death. If you're not sure, watch the Nature Channel, National Geographic or go to YouTube and see what a pack of wild African hunting dogs do to a gazelle or what wolves do to a healthy moose or what a grizzly bear does to a strong and healthy bull caribou. These brutal truths are there in Technicolor, waiting to be seen with only a click of your mouse! A deer not shot will eventually die by being struck by a car,

Continued ➤

predator, exposure or starvation. I am pretty certain that an old grouse doesn't die peacefully in its sleep, it most likely gets caught and killed by a coyote or a hawk and is eaten — not necessarily in that order!

I am not trying to suggest that, as hunters, we are doing wild animals a favour by killing them, but I do believe that, as hunters, we aren't doing anything unnaturally cruel.

It is for this and all the reasons I have outlined in this essay that you will never see me sit grimaced over an animal in a photo. For these reasons I smile with pride and want those that follow to see that pride in the photo itself and in my home. If I have a pet peeve about some hunters and anglers, it is that they often have photos taken of themselves sitting, sad-looking or grim over their harvest. For goodness sake, smile! Don't blow it now. Too often hunters/anglers look mean and nasty; why not show how you feel? Improve your image as a hunter/angler, smile and look happy about your harvest. If you aren't happy, ask yourself why you took this animal in the first place. Jose Ortega y Gasset, in Meditations on Hunting, said it best: "One does not hunt in order to kill; on the contrary, one kills in order to have hunted ... If one were to present the sportsman with the death of the animal as a gift, he would refuse it. What he is after is having to win it, to conquer the surly brute through his own effort and skill with all the extras that this carries with it: the immersion in the countryside, the healthfulness of the exercise, the distraction from his job."

It is always amazing to me how, given that we have molars for chewing and grinding, canine teeth for ripping and close set eyes declaring us to be predators, that we have somehow concocted the thought that we should eat nothing but grass or oat bran. That's not food ... it's what food eats! Nope ... for me and mine, it's ducks, geese, chicken, venison, elk, moose and beef! To me that is more natural because it's who I am and who my ancestors before me were! I respect your right to disagree and hope your choices are what are right for you, not what others tell you your choices should be! I am not prepared to allow other people to rent space in my head!

In the final analysis, perspective is everything when considering what is or is not a trophy. The question of what constitutes a trophy is ultimately a decision for you and you alone! Why you hunt is entirely up to you. However, in light of current pressures and societal opinion shifts, you should really be able to answer for yourself at least why you hunt. Now that our season is over, it's a perfect time to reflect on such an important question and choice.

May all your wilderness pursuits be both safe and rewarding. Let's do our best to make wildlife and wild places part of peoples' value systems so that it may be preserved to pass on to the next generation.

Cheers!



Choosing Your First Big Game Rifle

"... in today's world most of us do not have the time or the resources to devote to finding and purchasing a calibre for every Alberta big game situation in which we may find ourselves."

By Chuck Strong



Chuck Strong
Assistant
Program Coordinator
A.H.E.I.A.
Edmonton

I am about to head out on a slippery slope by suggesting that most hunters could get away with just one "do it all" big game rifle calibre. I will not be discussing the merits of one calibre or manufacturer over another as there are many, more intelligent and qualified people out there that have written and argued about this topic ever since the advent

of the firearm, than myself. What I am going to try and do with this article is equip the average hunter (first time or otherwise) with enough information so that they will be able to find a single rifle calibre that will be a fit for them and the big game they choose to hunt. I am positive that this short article will stir up a lot of controversy among the purists out there that believe that you should have a single calibre devoted to each big game animal and particular situation that you may encounter. This may be true to a point, but in today's world most of us do not have the time or the resources to devote to finding and purchasing a calibre for every Alberta big game hunting situation in which we may find ourselves.

A number of years ago and in a different life when I was single, I had a great paying job with a fair amount of disposable income. I had a gun safe full of firearms, each one devoted to a specific purpose. But life happened and reality set in. I got married, had children and lived through Alberta's first oil industry crash, so I decided I needed to pare down my firearms inventory. So I asked myself, "What calibre of rifle would be ideal for the big game I would be hunting in Alberta?" With a few easy to follow steps I was able to find that one calibre that worked for me and the game I would be hunting in Alberta. For thirty plus years I have used that same calibre to hunt big game throughout North America and it has never let me down. Over the years I have fine tuned my approach to choosing and purchasing a rifle calibre and, in my experience, by using the following few simple steps you should be able to find the right rifle for you.

1. Determine what big game you will want to hunt, make sure to include the ones you might want to hunt as well.
2. Where will you be doing the majority of your hunting? What is the geography of your primary hunting area?
3. Do you have any physical limitations that would limit the amount of recoil you can handle?

Now that you have put a little thought into the above questions, it is time to gather as much information from as many sources to which you have access. Books are an invaluable source of information and there have been many books written on the subject of rifle calibres by authors who shoot for a living. The internet is another good source where you can find reviews on the specific calibres in which you may be interested. There are also many forum groups that you can join and ask questions. Keep in mind that some opinions expressed on these forums you may need to take with a grain of salt; there are however some fairly knowledgeable people on these forums. Last, but not least, ask as many questions as you can of as many knowledgeable firearms owners as you can find.

You should now be able to narrow your choices down to just a few calibres that would be suited for your requirements. So now you need to head to those books again and chart the ballistics information of each of those calibres making sure to include the ballistic characteristics you feel are the most important. Here are a few that I would include:

1. Muzzle velocity (ft/sec), speed of the projectile
2. Bullet drop (inches at a given distance)
3. Energy (ft-lbs) rough indicator of the destructive force of a particular calibre
4. Bullet selection
5. Recoil energy (ft-lbs) aka: kick, the felt energy after a firearm is fired.

One other consideration you may want to take into account is the availability of ammunition for the particular calibre you are considering. If you happen to run low, is this particular calibre available at your local sporting goods store?

Now the real fun begins, with all the homework you have done you are now ready to choose that one rifle calibre that will work for your situation.



Great Meals from the Harvest

with Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
A.H.E.I.A. Red Deer - North

Ground Moose Casserole

1 lb. ground moose (or any wild game)

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 tsp salt | 1 tsp. white sugar |
| 2 - 15 oz. cans tomato sauce | 1 tsp. garlic powder |
| 1 c. sour cream | 1 - 8 oz. pkg. medium egg noodles |
| 1 large white onion (diced) | 1 - 3 oz. pkg. of cream corn |
| 1/2 cup parsley (chopped) | 1/2 c. shredded cheddar cheese |

In a large skillet brown ground meat over medium high heat until crumbly. Drain grease and set meat aside.

In the same skillet combine sugar, salt, garlic powder, tomato sauce and ground meat. Mix well over medium heat until everything is well incorporated (stir frequently). Remove from heat, cover skillet and cool to room temperature.

While the meat is cooling, bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add egg noodles and stir regularly. Cook until firm to the "tooth". Do not over-cook as they will be finished off in the oven. Drain and allow to cool slightly.

Preheat oven to 350°F. In the meantime, grease a 9x13" casserole dish.

Mix sour cream, cream cheese, parsley and onion in a bowl.

Next place half the noodles evenly in the casserole dish. Now place half of the sour cream mixture evenly over the noodles. Then evenly scoop half of the ground meat on top of the sour cream mixture layer. Repeat the process and top with the shredded cheese (no harm in adding more cheese if you like).

Bake uncovered until the cheese is browned (approximately 25-30 minutes). Allow to cool a bit prior to serving.

A salad and sourdough bread finishes this off nicely.

Mongolian Venison

- 1 lb. venison flank steak (sliced 1/4" thick on the diagonal)
- 2 tsp. canola oil
- 1/2 c. soy sauce
- 2/3 c. dark brown sugar
- 1 c. canola oil (for frying)
- 1 tbsps. garlic (finely minced)
- 1/2 tsp. grated fresh ginger
- 1/2 c. water
- 1/4 c. cornstarch
- 2 bunches green onions (cut in 2" lengths)

In a large skillet heat the 2 teaspoons of oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and ginger and simmer and stir for about 30 seconds. Be careful not to burn. Add the sugar, soy sauce and water. Raise the heat to medium-high and stir until sugar is dissolved (about 4 minutes). Remove from heat and set aside.

Combine meat and cornstarch in a bowl. Stir until thoroughly coated. Allow the juices to become absorbed by the cornstarch (about 10 minutes).

Heat remaining oil in a wok to about 375°F.

Shake off any excess cornstarch from the venison and drop into the hot oil a few at a time. Do not over crowd. Stir briefly and fry until the edges become crispy (about 2 minutes), but do not burn. Remove and drain on paper towelling to remove any excess oil.

Pour oil out of wok (make sure to recycle and not just pour it down the drain). Return wok to stove and re-heat to medium. Return the beef to the wok and stir. Add sauce mixture and stir to incorporate. Add the green onions, stir and cook for another 2 minutes.

Serve with your favourite rice. If you have never tried any scented rice now is the time. Jasmine rice is my favourite.

Enjoy!



Notice

Please place a special mark on your calendar for Saturday, February 7, 2015

The Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association Annual General Meeting will be held in Calgary at the BMO Centre, Stampede Park that day starting at 12:00 noon and ending at 3:00 p.m.

The W.I.S.E. Awards Banquet/Auction and a general celebration of this great cause will follow starting with a silent auction and cocktails at 4:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:00 p.m.

Hearing Protection

“ People who use firearms are much more likely to develop hearing loss than those who do not.”

By Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
A.H.E.I.A. Red Deer - North

Opinions on whether one should wear hearing protection while participating in numerous activities like hunting or shooting are as varied as discussions about politics. No one typically argues that it is very important to preserve your hearing, but when it comes to putting it into practice we tend to be very lax.

Concern for hearing safety has been going on for a very long time. A 15 year old lad named Chester Greenwood is credited with inventing the first earmuffs back in 1873. He was actually

awarded a patent in 1877. His earmuffs were designed to keep your ears warm and not necessarily to deaden sound. Shortly after this, Thomas A. Willson of Willson Safety Products started manufacturing earmuffs for sound protection.

Hearing protection has really evolved from its rudimentary beginning back in Chester's and Thomas' day. Today protection runs the gamut from basic insert style to units that actually magnify sound or deaden it depending on your specific needs. Some custom ones are constructed to form to your ear channel similar to hearing aids. So how do you know which one or ones are best suited for your needs?

The standard for measuring sound is by a decibel rating. The following chart will give you a better idea of the decibel rating on many common activities. The level at which sustained sound ex-

posure may result in hearing loss is over 85 decibels (dB). Virtually all provincial occupational health and safety jurisdictions have set the maximum workplace sustained level without hearing protection at 85-87 dB. The level at which sustained exposure may result in hearing loss is 90-95 dB. Pain begins at 125 dB. Even short term exposure can cause permanent damage and the loudest recommended exposure WITH hearing protection is 140 dB. Death of hearing tissue can begin at 180 dB. Currently the loudest possible sound is just under 200 dB.

Weakest sound level.....	0 dB
A whisper.....	30 dB
Normal conversations.....	60-65 dB
City traffic (from inside your vehicle).....	85 dB
Motorcycle.....	100 dB
Lawn mower.....	107 dB
Loud rock concert.....	115 dB
Jet engine (from 100').....	140 dB
Rimfire ammunition.....	135-170 dB
Centrefire rifle.....	155-170 dB
Shotgun blast.....	150-162 dB
Centrefire handgun.....	152-165 dB

Perception of increase in decibel levels:	
Imperceptible change.....	1 dB
Barely perceptible change.....	3 dB
Clearly noticeable change.....	5 dB
About twice as loud.....	10 dB
About four times as loud.....	20 dB

When choosing hearing protection, please keep in mind what they will be used for and choose accordingly. It is not uncommon for individuals to have a variety of hearing protection. Personally I have five to six that I utilize depending on the situation.

Let's start with basic single use insert style. They are inexpensive, easy to use and typically constructed of polyurethane foam or PVC foam. Their Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) ranges from 25-35. Also available are re-useable styles of insert ear plugs. Remember, the higher the NRR number, the greater the sound reduction. Some have other features such as cords and storage containers. This style is not really recommended for reducing higher dB levels. Some shooters will however use



these in conjunction with earmuffs to increase the overall sound reduction. For example, if you utilize insert style alone at the range, the reduction provided will not be enough to reduce the decibel rate to a safe zone. Do you have snorers at hunt camp? These are ideal. They typically are priced starting at under \$1.

Becoming increasingly more popular are the molded and digital custom insert styles that are being used by some competitive shooters. They tend to be more expensive, but are very effective, less cumbersome and fit perfectly.



Now let's look at earmuff styles. There are basically two different variations. Available are the basic styles with the headband going behind your neck or over the top of your head. There are also electronic styles available. Some will allow you to hear conversations, but will automatically shut off when noises reach the 85 dB range. I use this style on a regular basis when coaching at the shooting range. Instructions and responses are easy to hear, but when a shot is fired they kick in and block the higher dB sounds. The other electronic styles have some type of microphone technology. They are ideal for when you wish to amplify sounds. Many hunters have been using this kind to increase their ability to hear sounds at increased levels. They will also function in the normal way for noise reduction. Electronic styles range from \$40-\$200 depending on the features. Regular earmuffs can be found starting at under \$20. A.H.E.I.A. has them for just \$10.

Earmuffs come with numerous features; just select the one(s) that best suit your needs. Muffs can be very streamlined to make it easier for you to mount your firearm. When this is not a concern, regular style will do just nicely. Some are

“ Opinions on whether one should wear hearing protection while participating in numerous activities like hunting or shooting are as varied as discussions about politics. No one typically argues that it is very important to preserve your hearing, but when it comes to putting it into practice we tend to be very lax. ”



designed to fit over your head or behind your neck while others work with hardhats and some fold up for easier storage. There is also a selection specifically manufactured to fit youngsters and ladies who may require a smaller size. Want camouflage or pink, they have them as well.

People who use firearms are much more likely to develop hearing loss than those who do not. Firearms users tend to have high-frequency permanent hearing loss, which means that they may have trouble hearing speech sounds and

“ When choosing hearing protection, please keep in mind what they will be used for and choose accordingly. It is not uncommon for individuals to have a variety of hearing protection. ”

other high-pitched sounds. The left ear (in right-handed shooters) often suffers more damage than the right ear because it is closer to, and directly in line with, the muzzle of the firearm. Also, the right ear is partially protected by head shadow. People with high-frequency hearing loss may say that they can hear what is said but that it is not clear, and they may accuse others of mumbling. They may not get their hearing tested because they don't think they have a problem. They may also have ringing in their ears, called tinnitus. The ringing, like the hearing loss, can be permanent.

In my opinion your decision is clear, choose the right one(s) and use them.



“ How do you know which one or ones are best suited for your needs? ”





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Designing the AHEIA Conservation Education Magazine

Primitive Survival Shelters for Alberta Forests

By Dan Chow
A.H.E.L.A. Volunteer and Instructor

Introduction

If you stomp around the outdoors long enough, sooner or later you'll be in a situation where there will be a sudden need to stay out overnight. The problem could be as simple as an afternoon of berry picking and not being able to get back due to weather, changing light conditions or unfamiliar territory. It could be a case where you solo hike deep into the rugged high country after a trophy elk, make a successful shot just as the sun sets and now need to work hours into the night to field dress your animal. On a less happy note, consider a back country trip with a friend who gets injured and has to be left alone while you need to go for assistance or even worse, consider a wilderness canoe trip where an outfitter drops you off at a launch point and agrees to pick you up a week later downstream — then you lose your canoe and all your gear on white water the first day out. In any of those cases, someone will need shelter given our quick changing weather conditions.

You may have to face the reality that one or more of you will be out for at least one night. What you do next could be the difference between a very inconvenient camping adventure and a full blown survival situation.

In almost all cases, careful consideration of your situation will lead to the conclusion that there are two immediate priorities, fire and shelter.

If it's raining or snowing or precipitation is likely, shelter to keep yourself dry will be your first priority, superseding even fire. This article covers some of the principles of shelter construction in the bush we typically encounter in Alberta forests.

First Things First: The Basics

In Alberta, the weather can change anytime. Historical records show that snow has fallen in every month of the year in various parts of the province. With that in mind, clothing is your first line of defense against the elements. Dress (or have readily available in a daypack) using a layered system for what you anticipate as the worst possible weather conditions on your trip. That means wool or synthetic base layers, one or more insulating mid-layer(s) and finally a wind-proof and waterproof top layer. As the temperature and weather conditions change, adjust on the go by opening and closing buttons or zippers to vent heat or adding and taking off layers as needed so you don't wind up chilled as your sweat soaked clothes cool off when you stop.

Since you're dressing properly, it makes good sense to carry a few items on your person so they will always be with you. As a bare minimum, put some wooden strike anywhere matches in a waterproof container and a 12 metre length of strong nylon cord in your pants pockets and carry a full tang, non-serrated, fixed blade knife in a secure sheath on your belt. You may lose a lot of things in the bush, but your pants are probably among the last you'd lose. Within reason, if you are in the habit of carrying a daypack or fanny pack you can add gear to supplement what you have on. Don't get carried away, if you have too heavy or cumbersome a load, you'll start leaving your pack behind and won't have it when you need it the most.

What Nature Provides

If you find yourself in an emergency situation, sit down for a moment and consider what has happened, what you have and what you need to do. If it's pouring rain or snowing heavily, nature sometimes supplies ready to occupy shelters. In a spruce forest you should be able to find a large spruce tree with dense lower boughs that keep the ground around the trunk sheltered and dry even in severe rainstorms. A dead spruce that



Nature's finest, a mature spruce with low boughs providing an immediate shelter.

has blown over so that its roots are exposed above ground provides an earthen walled wind break. If you snuggle up close to either, you'll get decent but not spectacular protection from wind and rain. Another use of a wind downed spruce is to use the trunk as a natural ridge pole, then breaking off or cutting boughs from the underside and repositioning them to make walls so you can hunker down inside. In mountainous regions don't overlook caves, overhangs, boulders that provide shelter, but take extra precautions to not put yourself at risk by falling or collapsing rocks.

Primitive Societies

If nature isn't going to give you a break accept the fact that you will be building on your own. Shelters suitable for our northern conditions have been used successfully by early inhabitants for hundreds of generations simply because they work. Early explorers and fur traders who were perceptive enough to take advantage of the knowledge became much more self reliant and prospered since they could continue to work effectively regardless of conditions.

Shelters commonly used in the mid-1800s were not only effective because they were made largely of natural materials (found along



Sketch by Paul Kane (circa 1845), Library and Archives of Canada.

the way to minimize carrying unnecessary loads) leaving only reusable materials to be packed if critically needed (such as skins for sleeping robes and coverings for shelters). These concepts were well documented by noted Canadian painter Paul Kane's detailed sketches of shelters and other gear depicting the construction details. Today, we use much the same designs (although aided in large part by technology) which allows us to be sheltered from wind, rain and biting insects, accommodates a nearby warming fire, allows us to sleep somewhat comfortably and gives us a base of operations and a place to call home for a while.

Building a Lean-to, a Very Flexible Shelter

A lean-to shelter is commonly taught at outdoor skills and survival schools for good reason. Its design allows users to customize as needed to meet the conditions set by the emergency. In its simplest form, it is a walled wind break. In its most complex form, two built face to face resembles a simple log cabin. Unfortunately, as much as we would like, there is no one-size fits all recipe for lean-to shelters due to the variability of circumstances.



A common lean-to using tarps for the roof and ground sheet. This example, although functional, has major weaknesses with no ground insulation and the overly large opening allows heat to escape. It does provide great practice of construction techniques and is taught at most beginner camps.

For teaching purposes, most beginner courses use tarps and sleeping bags for "first night out" exercises. This is done to reduce construction time as well as to conserve natural materials at designated teaching sites. The problem is, when we are out hunting or backcountry skiing it's highly unlikely we would venture out for a day carrying sleeping bags, tarps and axes so we need to replace this gear with some basics such as matches, knife and cord.

Keeping in mind the basic principles of staying dry, keeping warm and getting sufficient rest, we need to practice addressing these principles until we can build solutions to any or all of them **on demand**. When we have that level of knowledge to deliver, our fear of an unexpected stay in the bush diminishes.

The desirable qualities of a lean-to include:

- It is easy to build using a wide variety of available natural materials (although the addition of a small amount of cover in the form of a lightweight tarp or some garbage bags in your daypack will shorten the build time considerably)
- It can be constructed to accommodate as few as one person and up to five or six depending on need
- The design allows the addition of a fire for warming, signalling or cooking and,
- If necessary, it can be configured to provide three sided protection for especially nasty conditions

Generally, the approach to building a lean-to involves a few steps but first a caution. Your finished product won't be as pretty as the ones you see in many videos, pictures or survival shows. In a real emergency, you will have no time to spend on beauty nor will you want to burn calories for aesthetics. All you need to do is to make sure it works for you. With that in mind:

1. **Select a suitable site.** Stay away from natural hazards such as standing dead trees, dry stream beds, avalanche prone slopes, major game trails. Be close to a source of firewood and building materials. Stay close enough to drinking water but not so close that insects will be a problem. Check to see if it's close to some form of natural shelter from wind, weather and rain and whether it is or isn't safe to build a fire, for warmth, for purifying water and cooking and to afford visibility (by a bright flame or smoke) to rescuers. Try to be on a reasonably flat surface that is neither on top of a ridge nor in the bottom of a valley. There are many other considerations that may have to be accounted for; the above list is a quick summary to give you an idea of what to keep in mind before you start to build.
2. **Size the footprint of the shelter.** The footprint will dictate all subsequent sizing decisions. As a general rule, build the shelter as small as possible to minimize the volume of inside air that has to be heated by a fire or by body heat yet still meets the objective of being somewhat comfortable so you can get some rest. Remember, if you have a fire in front of

Continued ➤

Primitive Survival Shelters for Alberta Forests ... cont.

your shelter, the warmest part will be closest to the fire and the coldest at the back. To get the most efficient sizing, think about how sardines in a tin are packed ... no wastage of space here.

- 3. Collect your building materials.** You will primarily be dragging back debris from dead and fallen trees with the possible exception of your all important ridge pole. For the ridge pole, it may make sense to cut a live tree for maximum strength (your fixed blade knife should be able to cut through a 10 to 15 cm tree with the aid of a baton) depending on the load (total weight of framing poles, insulation, wet snow, etc.) it is expected to bear. Don't bother cutting trees to size to be used as framing poles or the roof. If they are unmanageably long, simply break them to approximate size otherwise use them as they are.
- 4. Build the bed or sleeping platform.** One of the most overlooked considerations is how to stay off the ground so your body doesn't lose valuable heat to the cold and possibly wet ground. Building a bush bed simplifies the search for level ground as well since it can level out uneven spots if constructed properly. To manage smoke from your fire, the bed should be aligned parallel to the direction of the prevailing wind and the ridge pole.

There are two common bush beds, if you are fortunate enough to be in a spruce forest, spruce boughs can be arranged in layers until a height of about 30 cm is reached. This height will be reduced when you sleep on

your bed and the boughs are compressed but even when compressed, there will be enough mass to keep you off the ground. If spruce boughs aren't available you may have to make a bed using some of the logs brought back to make a bed frame that will support willow branches, poplar saplings or whatever is available. Using a log cabin style of construction, place two short levelling logs perpendicular to the ridge pole about the height of the tallest person using the bed. Select and place these logs so that once placed, anything on top will be more level than the ground (a great way to avoid roots and rocks is to get above them). On top of the levelling logs, place two side rails parallel to the ridge pole. On top of the side rails place two or three short support logs about where you would rest your shoulders, hips and knees. At this stage you will be about 20 cm above ground level. Arrange your collections of branches, saplings, grass, etc on top for insulation. In both cases, your bed should be high enough to use as a low seat when you aren't sleeping (an added bonus).

- 5. Secure the ridge pole.** Your bed determines the overall size of the shelter. The bed and ridge pole should be parallel to the direction of the prevailing wind. Ideally, the ridge pole should be lashed to two standing live trees at about shoulder height or a little lower for optimal strength. If there are no live trees handy, you will have to build tripods for support and lay the ridge pole across them. As a quick test, put your full weight on the se-

cured ridge pole and if it holds, you should be confident that it will withstand a wet snowfall without collapsing in the middle of the night.

- 6. Frame the structure.** Framing poles are used to provide a base of support for the insulation and weatherproofing that will complete the shelter. Using logs about 7 to 10 cm in diameter and about 3 to 4 metres long, lay them diagonally from the ridge pole to the ground so that the angle is about 45° to 60° depending on what you have to work with. In practice, the steeper the pitch, the better your roof will shed rain and snow. If you have the foresight to have a tarp handy, lay 5 or 6 poles down first so they will support the tarp, stretch the tarp starting from the top of the ridge pole to as far down as it will reach then place another 5 or 6 poles on top of the tarp. If you don't have a tarp but have access to more spruce boughs thatch the boughs closely into your framing poles to provide a weatherproof roof and backstop. Boughs won't be as waterproof as a tarp but, if properly built, should be adequate for all but the heaviest of downpours. If you have neither a tarp nor spruce boughs, your only option may well be to use plenty of poles closely packed together and layered with the objective of closing off any gaps that would allow wind and rain to pass through.

- 7. Insulate and weatherproof.** Insulation can be almost anything with enough mass to absorb and retain heat. Some examples of natural materials include logs, branches, boughs, bark, moss, grass, snow and whatever is able to create dead air space between you and the source of cold.

Some areas are littered with small dead trees about the ideal size for framing poles. With enough collected and layered on top of each other, they have a fairly good insulation value since the mass of the poles will absorb the heat when the fire burns strongly then slowly releases the heat overnight as the fire dies down. A side benefit of using logs as one or more layers is their use as firewood if you need. Instead of hauling more wood to camp in the middle of the night, simply raid your framing poles, burn them to stay warm then replace them next morning.

- 8. Fine tune and improve.** It is very unlikely that you will need your shelter for more than a few nights but in the unlikely event that you do, take advantage of opportunities to improve your shelter. Can you build a wall behind your fire to reflect more heat into your shelter? Do you need side walls to block out more weather? Is there a way to heat rocks near a fire to place under your bed at night to provide more warmth? The enhancements to make the situation more bearable are limited only by your imagination.

Internet Wisdom

Nowadays we can find lots of information on the internet, both documents and videos but are they any good? The honest answer is that some are, some aren't but some are plain silly and some are truly excellent. We need to assess what's presented critically. The most important consideration is whether the information that's posted

reflects the situations you may encounter or not. Notice that a lot of videos are not produced in the bush but in parks and backyards. Ask yourself if a handy-dandy, easy to build shelter will actually work in northern Alberta in a freak September snowstorm. If you're not sure, test it out under controlled conditions. If you can't stay reasonably comfortable in July, what are the chances of it actually working better in September?

Since we're already on the internet, check out the experience, qualifications and the reputation of the source of the information. Some posters are incredibly thorough about putting out only good usable information while others at the opposite end of the spectrum do it only to sell stuff or for an ego trip. Find out which is which.

The Value of Experimenting and Practice

Each of us is an individual and the trips we go on can throw different curves at us at any time. We need to think carefully about our needs and take steps to meet those needs. It's difficult if not impossible to take one approach to address all problems. By experimenting with and practicing the basic concepts, we learn how to adapt to each situation and that's a lot better than trying for a one size fits all.



A right-sized lean-to roomy enough for two or three and snug enough to retain body heat. Generous use of spruce boughs for the roof and floor provide insulation as well as serving as a moisture barrier.



Layout of a "bush bed" with levelling logs on the bottom, side rails and finally support rails. When covered with spruce boughs or fine willow sticks, the bed will elevate a sleeper about 20 to 30 cm above ground and create a dead air space to prevent heat from being conducted from the body to the ground and prevent moisture from wicking up to the sleeper.



Jacket shows the size of the bed and how supporting logs are placed to provide support for the shoulders, hips and knees.

The 80/20 Rule

By Allan Orr



Allan Orr
Assistant Conservation
Education Coordinator
A.H.E.I.A. Red Deer - South

Pretty much everyone has heard about the 80/20 rule (formally known as The Pareto Principle) and has seen it play itself out in many aspects of our lives. The rule simply states that in any circumstance, 80 percent of the effects come from 20 percent of the causes. This principle was first noted by economist Joseph Pareto who, in 1906, wrote that approximately 80 percent of the Italian land base was owned by about 20 percent of the population. He also observed that roughly 20 percent of the pea pods in his garden contained around 80 percent of the peas. In the following years and decades, the 80/20 rule has consistently shown itself to be evident in many, many aspects of life.

One of those aspects that volunteer-lead organizations see is 80 percent of the volunteering being done by 20 percent of the volunteers. Now, people may see this as a negative observation at first, but in reality it can be a very positive one! It all depends on where the observer sits in relation to the rule. If you are one of the 20 percent, you might feel like you are doing more than your share and others are taking advantage of your dedication to the organization. If you are one of the 80 percent who make up the other 20 percent of the workload, you can look at this as an opportunity to significantly increase the output of an organization simply by becoming more actively involved.

Let's look at it this way. Let's say that our organization has 100 people in it (how convenient!) and that we are getting the usual 80 percent of work out of the usual 20 percent of the people. This means that each of the 20 people are giving 4 percent of the overall work effort. The other 80 people are able to contribute 0.25 % of the work effort. Now let's see what happens if we take 10 of those 80 people and bump them up from 0.25% to 4% effort. Because an increase in effort gives us an increase in result, in effect we go from obtaining 2.5% result from these 10 people to getting 40% work effort! When we add this result to the 80% we are already getting from the other 20, we find that we are now receiving almost 120% efficiency by simply increasing our numbers of significant contributors!

So what am I saying?

Well, despite the fact that my theory above has about as many holes in it as the shot pattern of number 8 shot from a 12 gauge at 50 yards, the idea is that you can make a significant difference to your organization simply by helping out. It is fun, it is rewarding, and it can give you many, many opportunities to meet like-minded people who may end up as close friends or even as hunting buddies. How awesome is that! Being new to this organization, one of the things I want to focus on is in making it a place where people want to come, to volunteer and to help out. I am learning that there are many, many opportunities to contribute to the development and delivery of conservation education in Alberta. If you have been hesitant in the past, or if your life situation has changed (maybe no more kids in sports for example!) and you are looking for a great way to spend some time and meet some interesting people, give any one of us a call and let's see how we can get you involved.



Transport and Storage of Wildlife

By Allan Orr



Allan Orr
Assistant Conservation
Education Coordinator
A.H.E.I.A. Red Deer - South

Wow, what a great time!

You have been out with your best hunting buddies and were successful in bagging a trophy (or not so much of a trophy) moose/elk/deer and are looking forward to getting your legally taken meat home. As so often happens, a discussion ensues the evening prior to breaking camp regarding the dos and don'ts of legally transporting the animals with the number of opinions pretty much equaling the number of hunters in camp. So what do you do? Who is right?

The first thing to remember is that it is not difficult to legally transport legally taken wildlife as long as you understand the rules. In order to understand them, let's turn to the applicable legislation.

Section 57(1) of the Alberta Wildlife Act states that: "A person shall not transport wildlife in a vehicle, aircraft or boat unless the person is carrying the prescribed documents."

Those prescribed documents are described in Section 138 of the Alberta Wildlife Regulations as being:

- "(a) in the case of a person transporting dead wildlife who is the person who killed the wildlife, the document that authorizes possession of the wildlife;
- (b) in the case of a person transporting dead wildlife who is not the person who killed the wildlife, a bill of lading signed by the person who did kill it or by the person who consigned or otherwise has lawful possession of the wildlife, setting out
 - (i) the type and control number of the licence or permit under which the wildlife is possessed or the control number of the fur farm licence, as the case may be,
 - (ii) a description of the wildlife,
 - (iii) the points of origin and destination of the wildlife, and
 - (iv) the dates on which the wildlife is to be transported; ..."

What this means is that in order to transport wildlife in Alberta, the licence holder along with the licence authorizing the possession of the animal must accompany that animal, or the licence holder must fill out and sign a bill of lading outlining the details listed above, to be sent with the wildlife being transported by another person. A proper bill of lading can be found on page 68 of the *2014 Alberta Guide to Hunting Regulations* or downloaded from <http://www.albertaregulations.ca/huntingregs/bill-of-lading.pdf>.

One of these documents must accompany the wildlife until it is taken to the hunter's usual place

of residence and butchered, cut and packaged for consumption, or to a licensed abattoir for those same reasons. Once the wildlife is processed for individual consumption, it may be distributed to whomever the hunter wishes (but not sold or bartered for — that is a whole new discussion).

The other part of the discussion that must take place is on how to ensure that whoever is transporting the wildlife is doing so according to the regulations requiring evidence of sex and species to remain attached to the animal. Back to the legislation we go!

Section 98 of the Alberta Wildlife Regulations looks after both the tagging requirements and the requirement to leave evidence of sex and species attached. Here is what it says about tagging moose, elk and/or deer:

- "(1) A person who kills a wildlife animal referred to in this section under a licence as a part of which one or more tags have been issued shall securely affix the tag or tags by locking
 - (b) in the case of a moose, elk, white-tailed deer, mule deer, antelope, bison or non-trophy sheep, one tag through the space between the bone and the tendon of a hind leg directly above the hock and around either the bone or the tendon,
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1), a paper tag issued in conjunction with a special licence is to be affixed and locked in accordance with the instructions given on the reverse side of the paper tag.
- (3) A person shall not remove an affixed tag
 - (c) in the case of a tag affixed under subsection (1)(b)(without limiting the effect of clause (b.1)) or (d), until the carcass is
 - (i) delivered to the usual place of residence of the individual who killed the animal and is butchered, cut up and packaged for consumption, or
 - (ii) delivered to premises in respect of which there is a valid and subsisting permit authorizing the operation of a food establishment issued under the Food Regulation (AR 31/2006) or a licence for the operation of an abattoir issued under the Meat Inspection Act and is butchered, cut up and packaged for consumption."

So, pretty straight forward. Basically immediately after an animal is killed, the tag must be affixed properly and left on it until it goes to a place where it can be legally processed for consumption. The other component, the evidence of species and gender is outlined further along in the same section. It says that:

- "(4) A person shall not remove from the part of the carcass of an animal to which a tag has been affixed ... the evidence specified in subsection (5) of the sex and species of the animal, until the carcass is delivered to

- (a) the premises referred to in subsection (3)(b.1)(i) or (c)(i) and is butchered, cut up and packaged for consumption,
 - (b) premises described in subsection (3)(c)(ii), or
 - (c) an appointed officer, who authorizes that removal in writing.
- (5) The evidence referred to in subsection (4) of the sex and species of an animal is
- (a) the testicles, scrotum or udder and also, in the case of a white-tailed deer or a mule deer, the completely haired tail,
 - (b) if the animal has horns or antlers, the head with the horns or antlers attached, or
 - (c) if the animal does not have horns or antlers, the head complete with the skin.
- (6) A person who possesses the carcass of an elk, antelope or non-trophy sheep that is male and to which a tag has been affixed in accordance with subsection (1)(b) shall retain, with the carcass, the complete skull plate with the horns or antlers intact until the carcass is delivered to the premises referred to in subsection (3)(b.1)(i) or (c)(i) and is butchered, cut up and packaged for consumption, or to premises described in subsection (3)(c)(ii).

- (6.1) A person who possesses the carcass of a moose killed under the authority of a calf moose special licence and to which a tag has been affixed ... shall retain, with the carcass, the complete head until the carcass has been delivered to the premises referred to in subsection (3)(b.1)(i) or (c)(i) and is butchered, cut up and packaged for consumption, or to premises described in subsection (3)(c)(ii)."

Again, pretty straight forward. If you are transporting a big game animal you must ensure you leave the proper evidence attached to (and/or retained with) the carcass to ensure that you can prove that you have harvested the animal for which you are licensed.

So to make the long story short (too late for that, I know!), big game animals can be transported by anyone provided that all steps have been taken to prove that it has been taken legally and is being transported legally according to the applicable legislation. Don't let one mistake ruin your hunting trip. Pay as much attention to the legalities as you do to the care of your meat. Lack of attention to either one can mean you are waiting a long time to taste fresh wild game.

This has been a very brief look at transportation requirements. If you have questions, check out the 2014 Alberta Guide to Hunting Regulations either in paperback form or online, or call your nearest Alberta Fish and Wildlife District Office.



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Photo of grizzly bear cubs courtesy of Don Kesler Nature Photography.

ON THIS MONTH'S COVER:

Mountain Short-Horned Lizard

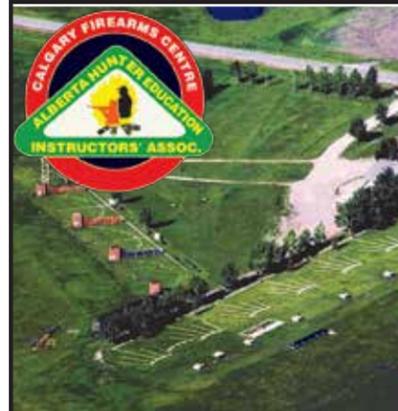


Despite its name, the mountain short-horned lizard does not live in the mountains, but instead persists in scattered localities in the extreme southeast corner of the province. Here, these small lizards roam the upper slopes and rims of south-facing coulees and canyons where they feed on ants and other small insects. They use a sit-and-wait style of hunting and wait for prey to pass by within close reach. The small size of adults and young make them easy targets for any predator. In the face of danger, the mountain short-horned lizard hides in full view by remaining perfectly still and relying on its camouflage and small size to avoid being seen. During the winter, the mountain short-horned lizard shelters in shallow burrows that it digs itself in soft, loose soil. In some years, winter survival may depend on the amount of snow cover that offers an additional blanket of insulation.

The mountain short-horned lizard is approximately 7 cm in length. It is considered "At Risk" in Alberta.

Courtesy Alberta Conservation Association

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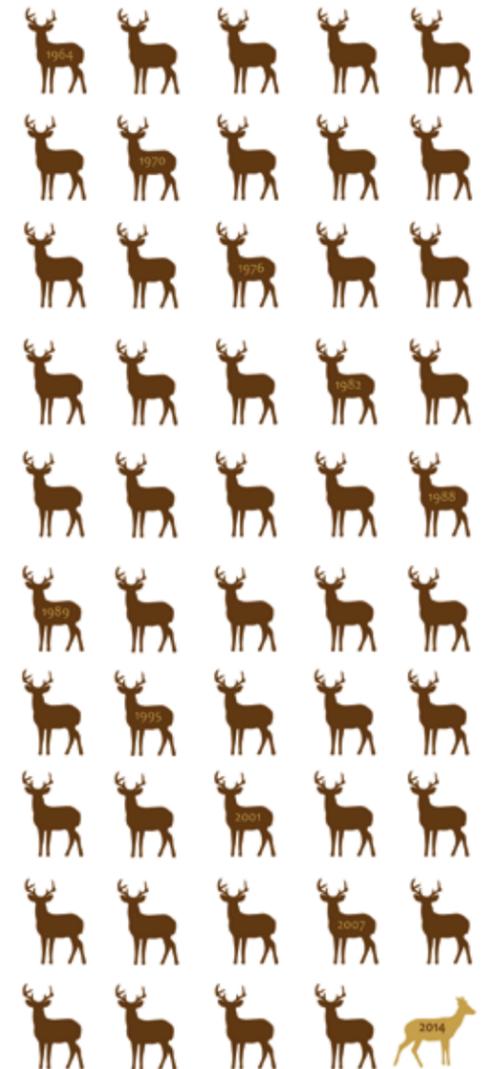
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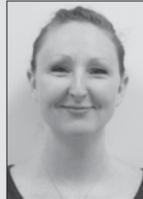


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Staff Announcements

The Alberta Hunter Education Instructors Association is pleased to welcome the following people to our team:



Erin Swanson Reinhardt has accepted the role of Executive Assistant to the President at our Calgary facility. She brings with her a wealth of knowledge in Administration and has experience hosting and coordinating events of all kinds. Her cheerful attitude and abilities will make her a tremendous asset to our Calgary facility and our entire team. Erin can be reached at erin@aeia.com or on her direct line at 403-319-2276.



Peter Bushe is our new Calgary Firearms Centre Manager. A graduate of the Renewable Resource Management program at Lethbridge College, Peter held several jobs in that field before taking a permanent position with the City of Calgary for 26 years. Now retired, Peter is excited to re-enter the Conservation world and we welcome him aboard. He can be reached at the Calgary Firearms Centre office at peter@aeia.com or 403-256-0665.



Allan Orr comes to us from Lethbridge where he was an instructor in the Bachelor of Applied Science in Conservation Enforcement program at Lethbridge College. Prior to that, he was a third generation Conservation Officer in Saskatchewan, eventually ending his career there as the Training Officer for the Conservation Officer Service. He is well suited to life with A.H.E.I.A. and has been involved with us for a number of years, having taken his college students to the Alford Lake Centre for Excellence many times and by being involved in annual mule deer

mentored hunts in the Lethbridge area. With almost 34 years of experience in this field, Allan looks forward to meeting the many people associated with A.H.E.I.A. Allan can be reached at allan@aeia.com, 403-319-2281 (Calgary office), at 403-256-0665 (CFC) or toll free at 1-866-852-4342.



Sandi Bedford accepted the position of full time Administrative Assistant in April 2014 with over 30 years of experience in customer service as well as volunteer experience in other conservation organizations. Raised in Michigan in a large, outdoors oriented family, she and her husband, Steve, now call Seba Beach their home. Sandi is very excited to be involved in A.H.E.I.A.'s programs and events and we hope to get her hunting soon. Sandi can be reached at the Edmonton office at 780-466-6682 or by email at sandi@aeia.com.



Meghan Thomas joined our Edmonton staff as a full time Administrative Assistant in September of this year. After almost seven years working as a "Trap Kid" at the CFC, Meghan brought her sunny disposition and positive attitude to the Edmonton office while she trains as an Emergency Medical Responder practitioner at the Alberta College of Paramedics. With her background in active sports and the outdoors, Meghan continues to be a great team member and we are so pleased that she is with us. Meghan can be reached at meghan@aeia.com or at 780-466-6682.

The skill set, organizational abilities and 'can-do' attitude that each Erin, Peter, Allan, Sandi and Megan exhibit, are sure to be an asset to A.H.E.I.A. and those whom we serve. I know you will extend a warm welcome to our newest team members.

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



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