

**WINTER 2023**

# **RANGE-OF-THOUGHTS**



**SHERWOOD PARK**  
FISH AND GAME ASSOCIATION

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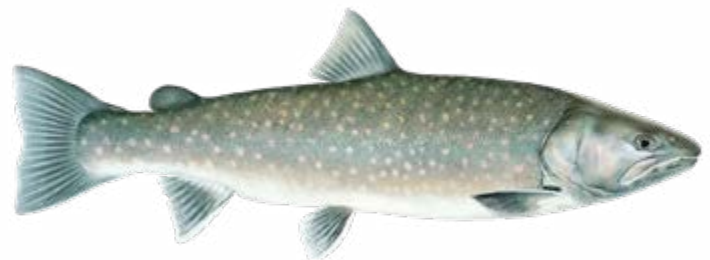
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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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## *Chris Russell*

Hello fellow members, welcome to the Winter 2022 issue of *Range of Thoughts*. A quarterly publication, *Range of Thoughts* is the SPFGA's e-zine, where we explore thoughts and ideas with longer-format pieces.

To re-introduce myself, until recently I was the SPFGA's VP of Operations. I was elected to the Board at the December 2018 AGM and served as the Facility & Operations Director. Then, as the role morphed into an Officer position over time, became the VP of Operations. I was appointed as SPFGA President at the December 2022 Board meeting.

A resident of Beaver County for 17 years and a member of SPFGA since January 2014, my wife Debbie and I are big game hunters and aspiring sport shooters, although with a 12-year-old daughter and 10-year-old son we don't often find ourselves with as much time as we would like to get out and enjoy the full variety of our regular league events. I am hopeful though to attend a Mapleseed event with my daughter this coming year.

My time on the Board has seen the SPFGA make important strides in coming to a better understanding of itself and where we're headed. On that note, I'd like to share some important and exciting things the Board has been working on over the past few months.



To begin, our club turned 60 this year. During much of our early years, we were small. And as is the case with small organizations, the work was done by those willing to show up and do it. Typically, if you want to do something beyond casual volunteering at a work party, a Board position was created for your task. Most ongoing functional work occurred like this.

The Board grew steadily in this way. At its peak in 2018, it consisted of 23 officers and directors of various positions. This made for challenges at meetings, with everyone giving their input in a round table format on each matter under discussion.

The club membership grew over this time as well, particularly in the last couple of decades, easily quadrupling since 2006.

As the club has grown, so too has the volume and the complexity of the Board's work. Simultaneously, we have seen a steady decline in members' availability and interest in Board service. We also see the need for sustainability in the demands asked of volunteers stepping forward for Board service.

We've had many discussions about how the Board's responsibilities have continued to grow, passing the point where volunteers can realistically provide what's needed. Splitting the work up across more people on a larger Board isn't an answer – we've tried that. It only works if you can find people to volunteer, and increasingly they are not. Ultimately though, it's much less efficient. All of this has increased our concern about Board health in the long term. Through these discussions we could see that the time had come for the Board to move to the role of navigator and shift its day-to-day operational work to paid staff.

This transition from a Board with an operating focus to one with a governance focus is a substantial change for any organization, but a necessary and natural one as it grows.

We appreciated that we've begun making some of these changes already:

- Some day-to-day work previously done by Board members was moved in 2017 to contract work through the hiring of

Managewise, an association management firm.

- In 2020, following the departure of our previous part-time maintenance person, a full-time maintenance technician was hired to attend to the ongoing tasks of facility maintenance. This gave us more control over the work being done and kept us from continuing to be at the mercy of contractors' schedules.
- Over several review periods, there has been a deliberate condensing of the Board to fewer positions with higher-level areas of responsibility.
- Considerable time and energy have been invested into creating and updating formal governance instruments: vision statement, mission statement, organizational objectives, bylaws, and policy manual.

Continuing along this line, we made the formal decision in the spring to take the SPFGA into the next step of its evolution and transition the Board to a governance model, shifting the bulk of its operational responsibilities to an Executive Director. This newly created role reports to the Board and is responsible for:

- Management of day-to-day operations, delivery of programs and services, ensuring regulatory compliance, supervision of staff.
- Participating with the Board in future-direction planning.
- Strategic Planning (in collaboration with the Board, develop and execute strategic plans including a 5-year plan, marketing & communications plan, budget plan, and risk management plan).
- Financial Management (expenditure approval; oversee bookkeeping and payroll; ensure adequate insurance).
- Public relations and partnership development.

The Board, freed of the day-to-day weight of operational responsibilities, is now able to set out on a path of governance, its responsibilities becoming more strategic in nature:

1. **Determine the organization's mission and purpose.** It is the board's responsibility to create a statement of mission and purpose, and to review it periodically for accuracy and validity.
2. **Select the organization's Executive Director and provide performance reviews for that individual.** The Board must also ensure that the



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

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Executive Director, who has responsibility for the administration of the organization, receives the moral and professional support he or she needs to further the organization's goals.

3. **Ensure effective organization planning.** As steward of the association, the Board must actively participate with the staff in an overall strategic planning process and assist in implementing the plan's goals. The Board should help the Executive Director with the development of business plans, policy objectives, business strategies, and priorities.
4. **Ensure adequate resources.** One of the Board's foremost responsibilities is to provide adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission. The Board should work in partnership with the Executive Director and staff to set membership fees and raise funds from the community.
5. **Manage resources effectively.** The Board, to remain accountable to its members and any donors, and to safeguard its tax-exempt status, must assist in developing the annual budget and ensuring that proper financial controls are in place.
6. **Determine, monitor, and strengthen the organization's programs and services.** The Board's role in this area is to determine which programs are the most consistent with an organization's mission, and to monitor their effectiveness. By constantly reviewing the organization's work, the Board ensures the organization's capacity to carry out its programs.
7. **Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability.** The Board is responsible for ensuring adherence to legal standards and ethical norms. The board must establish pertinent policies and procedures (e.g., personnel policies, operational procedures), and adhere to provisions of the organization's bylaws and articles of incorporation.
8. **Recruit and orient new board members; assess Board performance.**

Having made this crucial decision, a committee set about to establish the job description for an Executive Director position and recommend the necessary budgetary adjustments. As the committee was completing this work, it was made aware that a highly qualified and potentially interested candidate had become available. Mindful of the need for efficiency while the opportunity was available, a decision was made to directly solicit and review this candidate's application before deciding if a formal job posting process was required.

A series of discussions followed, ending after considerable deliberation in the decision to hire Delinda Ryerson as the SPFGA's first Executive Director.

Delinda brings 15 years of leadership experience and 25 years of conservation experience as a fisheries and wildlife biologist. In her various roles in both government and non-profit organizations, Delinda has demonstrated the leadership skills and expertise to deliver results in the areas of strategic planning and implementation, budgeting, project planning, partnership building and communications. What impressed the committee most was Delinda's genuine commitment to conservation principles and the strong desire to deliver outstanding services in support of our organizational mandate. Her diverse knowledge and experience will add a valuable perspective to the Board's own collective strengths. Delinda accepted our offer and began in her new role on May 15, 2022.

The time since has been filled with a great deal of work by both Delinda and the Board as each settle into their new roles.

With pride and an eye of optimism on the road ahead, we make an official and overdue introduction of Delinda to the membership. I look forward to working with her as we chart a future path for the SPFGA together.



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

## *Delinda Ryerson*

I am delighted to introduce myself to the members of the SPFGA as your first Executive Director. Driven by my love of nature, I have spent most of my personal and professional life in the pursuit of conserving it. I am an avid angler and naturalist, not to be mistaken with a naturalist, which I understand have also been seen in our neck of the woods!

I am regularly complimented on my energetic drive, personable and approachable demeanor, and my innate capacity to build and maintain productive, lasting business relationships. I thrive in a collaborative, team-oriented environment, and I have been told on many occasions that my middle name should be 'Tenacious'.

I often feel like a dual citizen because I understand, and work based on two very different disciplines. Possessing a solid background in biology and natural resources management; having been mentored and supervised by some of the best biologists in the province, and later leading conservation agencies and organizations to new heights of success in a management capacity. I step into this important role with considerable senior-level experience in strategic, organizational planning and management, as well as expertise in fund development and budgeting. I have worked for some fantastic non-profit organizations including the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute, the Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society and the Alberta Invasive Species Council, and I know how critical it is for non-profits to have a diversity of revenue streams. I am a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and I will earn a Graduate Diploma in Management (GDA), Phase One of a Master of Business Administration (MBA), from the Faculty of Business at Athabasca University in September 2023. Some of my other formal training includes leading scientific teams, public participation, facilitation, human dimensions in wildlife management, leadership communications, adult learning, media training, and Indigenous awareness.

Finding myself in the job market very briefly last spring, the SPFGA reached out to enquire about my interest in taking on the Executive Director role. After numerous



conversations with the Board, I liked what I heard about the organization's vision and future plans so much that I decided to join the SPFGA team to turn those plans into reality.

There is no doubt that our 720+ acre property is amazing. Soon after embarking on my role, I recognized several infrastructure updates and upgrades that needed to occur so we could deliver the new courses and programming that the Board and I envisioned. With our outhouses not being up to code and desperately requiring considerable attention in the state they were in, the hiking trails and the Black Powder Trail in need of significant maintenance attention, and the use of the clubhouse restricted to only two seasons; I quickly got to work developing an upgrade plan. A forced-air furnace installed in the clubhouse facilitates its use year-round, and much-needed upgrades to the electrical and plumbing are underway. Further clubhouse, shooting shed, and Black Powder Trail improvements and updates are slated for 2023.



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

It is incredible to see how the SPFGA has progressed from its early beginnings to today. I am looking forward to employing my extensive experience in strategic, organizational management to assist the Board in developing a suite of essential strategic plans to achieve its vision and become a focal point for the shooting sports, outdoor-related recreation and pursuits, and become a nationally recognized nature-based education and conservation organization.

I will be building new partnerships and alliances in 2023 that truly benefit the SPFGA and help us service our mission. To ensure the Board is fully supported in their transition to a governance model, two part-time

positions have been staffed in 2022 to facilitate the shift of day-to-day work, with more planned for 2023.

I look forward to working with the Board on the development of new programming, like hunter education, natural history, Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) camps. As an organization, we will need to diversify our revenue sources, as our sole dependence on our excellent ranges as a draw is precarious.

I'm thrilled to serve as Executive Director for this amazing organization, and I know that together we will achieve mighty things!

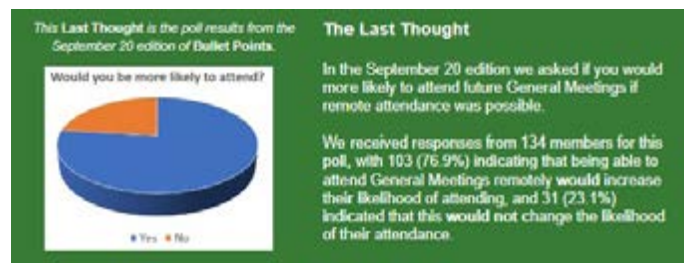
## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on Thursday, April 20, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. Presentation of the audited 2022 financial statements, the appointment of the auditor for the 2023 financial statements, and Board elections will occur at this meeting.

The AGM will be held remotely once again. Meeting attendance and vote participation has been significantly better in the online format than we ever had with in-person meetings. We wouldn't have ever had a chance to observe this if COVID hadn't forced us, but now that we've tried it the case for online meetings is quite clear. **We polled the membership** about this in fact, asking when it's possible to hold in-person meetings again whether you'd be more likely to attend if you could do

so remotely versus attending in-person. You indicated a clear preference for the online format, with 76.9% of you indicating that you'd be more likely to attend if you could do so remotely from home.

We went further, **asking which time of the week** was most optimal for you to attend a virtual meeting. From that poll, a clear majority of you indicated a preference for a weekday evening.



We have seen these numbers borne out in terms of meeting attendance and vote participation—there has been a sustained substantial increase in participation with the online format. It's difficult to make a case for an in-person AGM based on these data. And while we have explored the possibility of a hybrid approach, research indicates that the logistics of managing this well are difficult. Remote meetings are nonetheless valid and proper, consistent with the requirements of Bylaw 3.3.1.





# TROPHY MEASURING EVENT

Trophy measuring for the **2022 Wildlife Awards** will take place at the **Sherwood Park and District Chamber of Commerce (100 Ordze Ave in Sherwood Park)** on Sunday, February 12, 2023, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please bring your harvested wildlife and your hunting stories. Measurements will be taken while you wait, and your trophy will be returned to you that same day.

**Forms can be found online here.** To keep things moving smoothly, please download and fill out your forms ahead of time.

**Photo award entries can be submitted by email to [info@spfga.ca](mailto:info@spfga.ca)** by March 15, 2023. Please submit one or two lines of information with each photo. Two awards will be made: one for wildlife photography, one for scenic photography. ***Please note: Electronic submission only, no physical prints will be accepted. All submitted images become the property of the SPFGA; we will use them for any purpose we see fit. Photos must have been taken by an amateur photographer who is a current SPFGA member.***

***Please note: This event is for SPFGA members with active 2023 memberships only. Please print your membership card from your member portal and bring this with you as well.***





# REMINDER TO COMPLETE THE ORIENTATION BEFORE FEBRUARY 15, 2023

If you renewed without having to complete the orientation (common for members who renewed prior to the end of 2022), this is a friendly reminder that you will need to complete the orientation before February 15, 2023.

As has been mentioned several times in recent months, **the gate access cards of any 2023 member who has not completed the orientation by Feb 15, 2023 will be made inactive on that date.**

Anyone who renewed in 2023 will have had to complete the orientation before being able to renew.

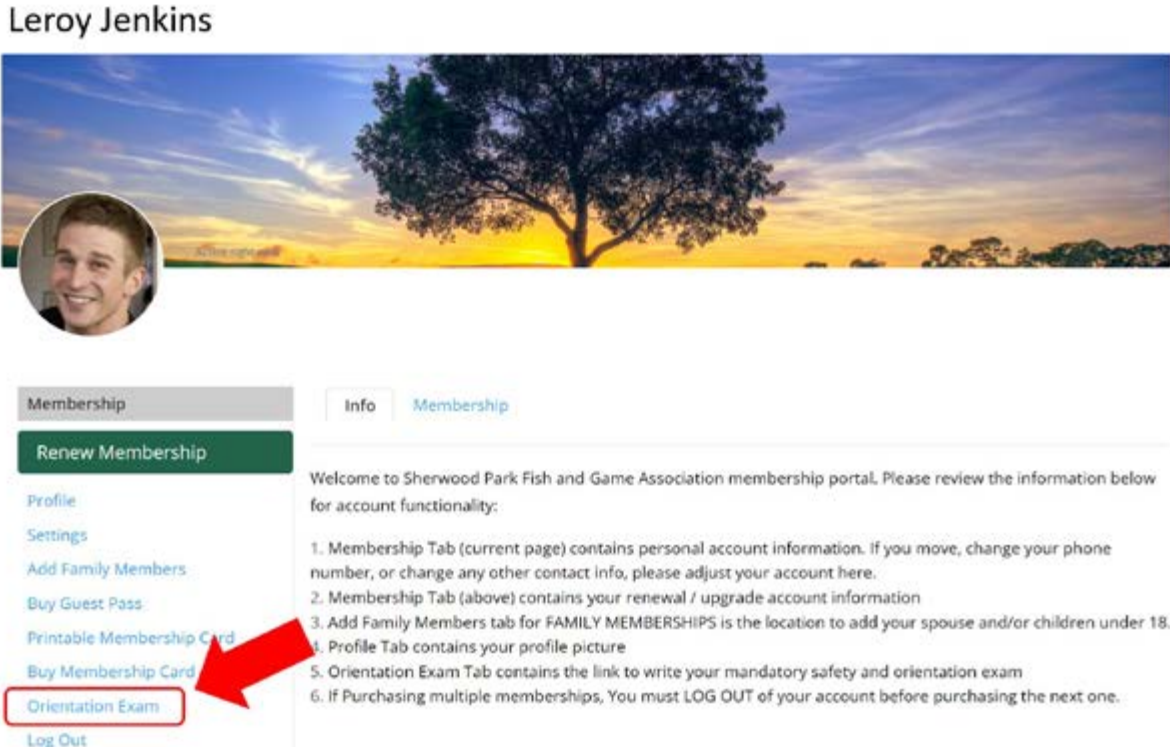
All new members must complete the orientation before receiving their gate access card. (Completing

an orientation has been a requirement of new members for years.)

Going forward, all members must repeat the orientation every three years. The membership system will track this and let you know when you need to complete it again.

## How do I take the orientation?

To take the orientation, sign into your member portal and click the 'Orientation Exam' link on the side menu. Then, in the window on the right, click the 'Click here to take the orientation exam' link. This will take you into the orientation.



**Leroy Jenkins**

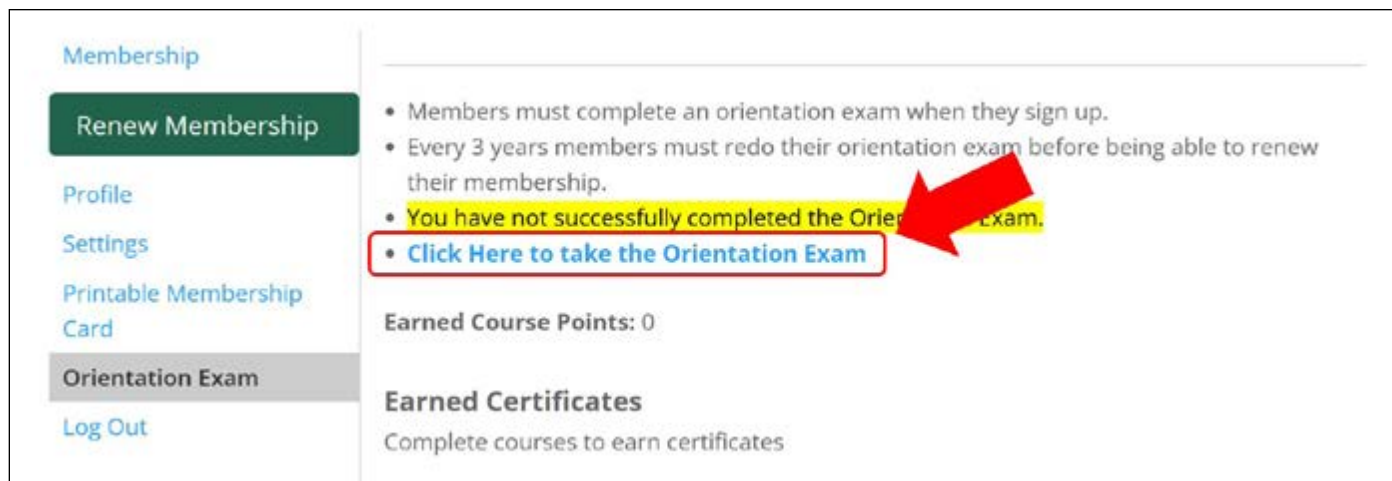
Membership Info **Membership**

**Renew Membership**

Profile  
Settings  
Add Family Members  
Buy Guest Pass  
Printable Membership Card  
Buy Membership Card  
**Orientation Exam**  
Log Out

Welcome to Sherwood Park Fish and Game Association membership portal. Please review the information below for account functionality:

1. Membership Tab (current page) contains personal account information. If you move, change your phone number, or change any other contact info, please adjust your account here.
2. Membership Tab (above) contains your renewal / upgrade account information
3. Add Family Members tab for FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS is the location to add your spouse and/or children under 18.
4. Profile Tab contains your profile picture
5. Orientation Exam Tab contains the link to write your mandatory safety and orientation exam
6. If Purchasing multiple memberships, You must LOG OUT of your account before purchasing the next one.



Membership

**Renew Membership**

Profile

Settings

Printable Membership Card

**Orientation Exam**

Log Out

- Members must complete an orientation exam when they sign up.
- Every 3 years members must redo their orientation exam before being able to renew their membership.
- You have not successfully completed the Orientation Exam.
- [Click Here to take the Orientation Exam](#)

Earned Course Points: 0

**Earned Certificates**

Complete courses to earn certificates

### How long does it take to complete?

It will take about an hour-and-a-quarter to an hour-and-a-half to complete the orientation's six lessons and do the exam at the end. This can be broken up as needed – you mark the parts you've completed as done and it saves your place. The end exam is open book with hints and you can take it as many times as you need to reach the 95% pass mark.

### Are there in-person sessions?

For members who truly cannot complete the orientation online, we will be holding in-person orientation sessions at the clubhouse on the property on the following dates:

- January 14 & 15 (Saturday/Sunday)
- February 5 (Sunday)
- February 11 & 12 (Saturday/Sunday).

All sessions will begin at 9:30 a.m., please bring a pen or pencil to use when completing the exam. **Pre-registration by contacting the office at 780-467-0085 is required.**

**Please note:** walk-ins will not be accepted.

Please note that **not being able to secure a spot at an in-person session does not remove the responsibility to have a certificate of completion prior to February 15, 2023.**

### Will new members have to take this orientation this too?

Yes, absolutely. Starting January 1, 2023, all *new* members will be required to complete this same orientation prior to receiving their electronic gate access card.

### Will we need to repeat this orientation again?

Yes, this is the plan. The facility, the ranges, and the rules themselves will continue to change and evolve. To make sure a consistent high bar of knowledge and understanding, going forward every member is required to repeat the orientation every three years to ensure that their knowledge of our rules remains up to date (this is in the [membership terms and conditions](#)). The membership system has been set up to manage this for us, checking the last date of each member's certificate of completion, and ensuring that they retake it after three years have passed.



*Sam Hofmeyer, Political Action Director*

The constitutionality of firearms ownership is fundamentally different for Canadians than it is for our American neighbors to the south and it has been reaffirmed repeatedly in Canadian legal decisions such as *R. v. Hasselwander* (1993), *R. v. Wiles* (2005), *R. v. Hudson* (2009), and *R. v. Montague* (2010).

Going a step further, we see in the Criminal Code of Canada that even possession of a firearm is an unlawful act, UNLESS you fit one of a few exemptions, one of which is having PAL/RPAL which is the category most of us sports shooters and hunters fit into.

Keeping the aforementioned in mind, we can see that the government and courts have a lot of control over the simple possession of a firearm in Canada. With ownership not enshrined in the constitution or being upheld in court we will always be at the whim of hostile governments and always fighting to keep our hard-earned property. Obviously, the sitting Trudeau government is no exception, but what is surprising (to me at least) is the manner and timing of the way they have approached their firearms legislation. I doubt firearms owners were under any illusions that hunting and shooting sports would survive a Liberal government unscathed by government action, but I don't think anyone, including some Liberal MPs, were aware of what was in the pipeline.

# IMPLICATIONS 0



I'm not going to get into the weeds of what the issues are with the May 1, 2020 Order-in-Council (OiC), the handgun freeze, Bill C-21 or the amendments, as there has been a lot of analysis by people far more qualified than myself. The CCFR YouTube channel and Ian Runkle's YouTube videos are a good place to start. However, I will outline some points concerning the SPFGA.

Make no mistake, Bill C-21 will affect the SPFGA. The most obvious effect will be the number of restricted firearms that can be legally purchased and/or transported to a range being severely reduced. The actual number won't be known until the bill receives royal assent and comes into force. And, with the "evergreening" clause and the RCMP firearms lab still being able to make decision on what is a "variant" of a prohibited firearm and what is not, we will likely never know with certainty what is next to be added to the prohibited list.

The obvious run-out of this is that with Bill C-21 keeping handguns from being purchased or transferred, there will be no new handgun owners as members and with the May 1, 2020 OiC keeping AR-15's (and others) locked in safes, there's a reduced requirement for range memberships. Coupled with uncertainty about hunting rifles and detachable magazines in the amendments to Bill C-21, we end up at a point where we can reasonably expect an appreciable drop in demand for range memberships in 2023. Looking forward and projecting the effect of this shortfall is part of where the increase in membership fees for next year comes from, in fact.

Using the opportunity created by shifting its responsibilities to staff, the Board has been focusing on a strategic plan for future directions of the SPFGA. Part of this is diversifying our revenue streams. We recognize that our ranges have historically been our

major draw, the revenue from which has funded our conservation-related projects, our library donations, update to the property, and donations to partners aligned with our mission. How to continue all of this while still maintaining the health of the organization will require broadening our draw beyond simply operating an excellent range facility and is an important question currently occupying the Board's thoughts.

### **So...as SPFGA members, what can you do?**

The first and most impactful is to **join our letter writing campaign against Bill C-21**. Add your own thoughts if you wish, then sign and send it to Ottawa (postage is not required). The intent of this is to give Canada's MPs a sense of the sheer number of people this affects, because many still think of hunters and sports shooters as a "fringe minority" who don't affect chances of re-election. So, we need to get as many of Canada's 2.2 million licensed firearms owners as possible to cover their desks in letters which can't be overlooked. Next, stay informed. We are well and truly past the point where deer hunters can think that their bolt actions won't be prohibited or trap shooters thinking that shotguns won't go on the banned list. They have not been spared, so firearms owners need to closely review what is actually written into legislation, not what politicians on either side say is there. Lastly, look at your SPFGA membership as much more than just access to a range, come camp at the campground, hike the trails, drop a line in the trout pond, or simply come have a picnic on the lawn at the clubhouse. Check out the four organizations the member-directed donation portion of your membership fee can be directed towards and pick one that fits your personal philosophy – the SPFGA will automatically send your donation to them. Check out the reports we've received back from these organizations on the projects your donations support.

# F BILL C-21 FOR SPFGA



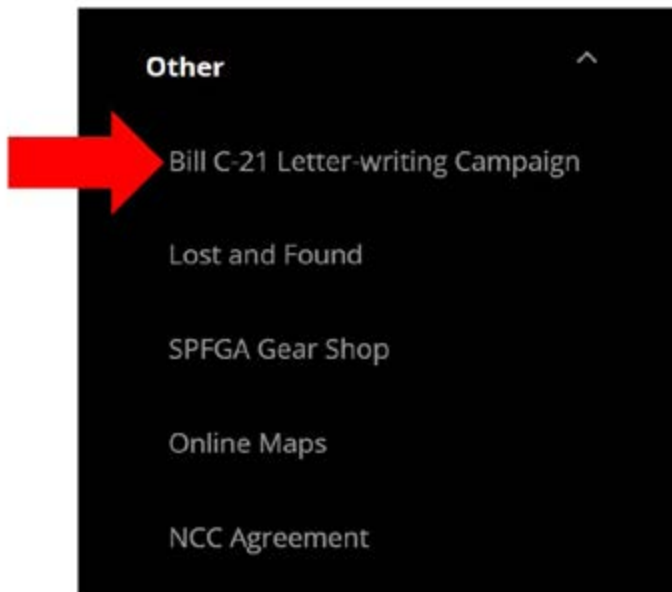
# SPFGA LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGN

Canada's anti-firearm advocates like to speak scornfully about Canada's gun lobby like it's some faceless fringe special interest group, shifting about menacingly in the shadows. It's an age-old tactic, this playing on the public's nameless fears. The problem is, it couldn't be further from the truth.

This so-called "gun lobby"? It's each of us. Individually and collectively, we are ALL Canada's gun lobby—each SPFGA member and each of Canada's 2.2 million law-abiding firearms owners.

We're teachers, welders, physicians, cabinetmakers, stay-home parents, engineers, retirees, researchers, students, scaffolders, moms, dads, sons, daughters...we're fibers of the cloth of Canadian democracy. And we raise our voices in a lawful and respectful way to let our elected officials know how we feel...which is literally what lobbying is.

Bill C-21, the latest in a seemingly endless round of anti-firearms legislation, promises to threaten the fabric of the SPFGA's mission statement. That's a problem. So, we need to dig into this together and let the federal government know how we feel. To help you do that, we've built you some tools you can use to raise your voice to the ears that need to hear it.

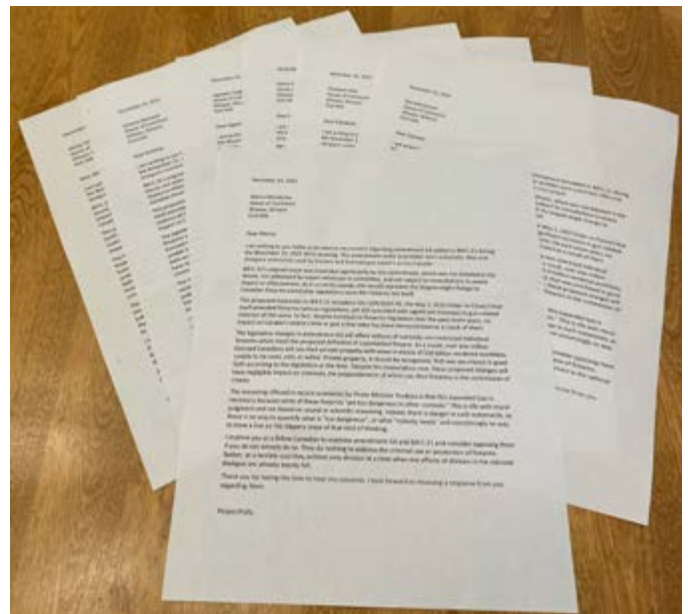


On our [website](#) are the components of a letter-writing campaign. We've set it up so it's super-simple and easy to do. You won't even need envelopes or stamps. You'll be sending a letter to seven elected officials. We provide you the letter, which you can use as-is or modify as you choose, and give you their House of Commons mailing address. From there it's a fill-in-the-blanks kind of deal.

So please, in your spare time over the next few weeks, click the link and take 15 minutes to this. That's all it will need.

And if you're feeling energetic, you can expand from there and send letters to every member of the Liberal caucus, or all MPs who voted in support of Bill C-21 following its first reading, or whichever MPs you feel need to hear this message.

When you've got your letters done, post a picture of the pile of them on The Ketchamoot Discourse Facebook discussion page and inspire others! (Not on The Ketchamoot Discourse yet? [Join here!](#))



# FROM THE KETCHAMOOT DISCOURSE

*The Ketchamoot Discourse is our club's private Facebook discussion group. It was created as a members-only social media space where members can gather in discourse with one another. (Not part of The Ketchamoot Discourse yet? [Join here!](#))*

A question that had been posed on the discussion group was whether wildlife mounts could be legally sold. A member in this case had inherited a deer mount but didn't have room for it, so wanted to know what his options were.

Following an interesting online discussion, the member posted back that he'd found the answer to his own question: **It is illegal to sell or even advertise to sell an unregistered mount or hide;** registration is an absolute legal requirement prior to sale. In order to be legally sold, a mount must:

- have been harvested in Alberta
- have been harvested three or more years prior
- be registered at an **Alberta Fish and Wildlife** office prior to sale.

The registration process itself is simple and straightforward enough, with a registration number being affixed to the back of the mount and the particulars of the mount being recorded by Alberta Fish and Wildlife.

If the mount was harvested in another province, it will be necessary to contact the Fish and Wildlife office in the province it was harvested in order to register it with them. The details of each province's registration rules may differ slightly.





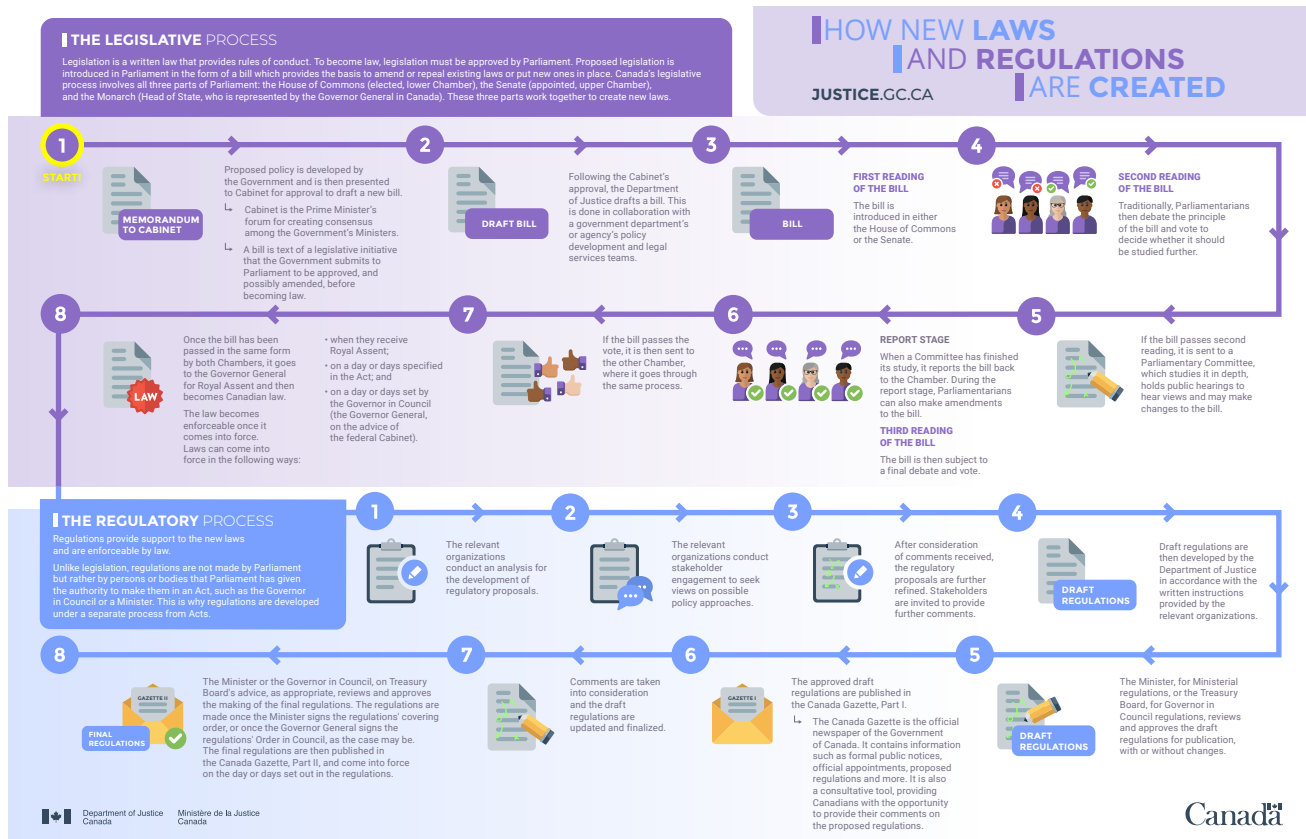
# HOW BILLS BECOME LAWS IN CANADA

Bill C-21 appears in a lot of the conversation lately. Even within this very issue, it's a topic of discussion a number of times.

But—and this is an important ‘but’—it's important to recognize that this bill is simply proposed legislation, it is not yet law. This is important, because much of the

discussion occurs based on the understanding that it's already in effect, even though it isn't.

This article aims at trying to bump up the understanding about how a how a bill becomes law in Canada, because it will help understand better where we're at with Bill C-21.



A law begins with a motion to introduce a bill that proposes the law onto the House of Commons Order Paper, the list of things the House discusses.

At introduction to the House, the bill receives its first reading. Here, members of parliament are free to comment on and ask questions about the bill and propose amendments.

It may go to committee review at this point, or it may advance to its second reading at a later date. This gives members of parliament and their staff time to review the bill in further detail.

At the second reading, a further opportunity of discussion and debate occurs. Potential amendments are proposed and debated at this time.



The bill is then referred for further consideration in committee. Here, expert testimony is sought on the implications and ramifications of the bill. A bill like C-21 would be reviewed by [SECU, the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security](#). This is where Bill C-21 is currently, committee SECU review, and has been since July 2022. The House has adjourned now and is on break until January 30, 2023, so further review of Bill C-21 will not occur until February 1, 2023.

At conclusion of committee review, the bill enters a report stage where the findings from committee review are examined.

When the report stage findings have been sufficiently reviewed, the bill receives its third and final reading in the House. Further amendments are proposed and debated at this time.

Following conclusion of third reading debate, members of the House vote in consideration of passing the bill to the Senate for its review. The role of the Canadian Senate is the chamber of sober second-thought for potential legislation passed by the House.

Progress through the Senate works much the same as it does through the House, with three readings, debate, and committee review. A bill may be sent back to the House for further work if the Senate feels that it requires additional work.

After reaching third reading in the Senate and any proposed amendments have been settled, a bill may be passed by the Senate. This serves to inform the Governor General that the bill is ready to become law.

The Governor General issues Royal Assent, taking the bill from proposed legislation into actual law.

Finally, a law must “come into force” meaning that the date at which its effect becomes active is reached. Once at that date, that law is then in effect throughout Canada.

We go through all of this to point out to you that Bill C-21 is not in effect, it is simply proposed legislation at this point. It still has a lot of ground to cover before passage in the Senate, receiving Royal Assent, and coming into force. It can fail at any one of these points. More importantly, it is open to the effect of the voice of the Canadian people, who can tell members of Parliament how they should act in regard to this legislation. We still have influence at this point, on other words, and it benefits all of us to use our influence now.

[In the previous article, we present the letter-writing campaign, developed and prepared for you to use. Please join us in this campaign](#) to use your voice and exert your influence.



# DOES SPFGA BAN PROH

This is a question we get fairly often—from people with opinions on both sides of the question. And with the uncertainty raised by potential legislation like Bill C-21, it's timely.

The short answer, if you read nothing else in this piece is the summary line at the end: No, the SPFGA has not banned prohibited firearms from the facility.

Why not? Because it's a pointless thing to do—if a thing is already illegal, it makes no sense to state in our rules that engaging in illegal acts is not permitted. If a firearm already cannot be legally transported or used, what use is there in stating anything further on the matter? It would be like saying “*The practice of poaching is forbidden on our huntable properties.*” It just makes no sense to do so.

Ultimately though, in our view it's the wrong question.

The right question is: *Is it within the SPFGA's purview to interpret and enforce the law?*

And the answer is of course: ***Absolutely not.***

## First, legislation is complex

Firearms legislation have seen continuous changes over the decades. Some illustrative examples: the introduction of the Firearms Acquisition Certificate (FAC) in 1977, Bill C-17 under the Campbell government in 1991, Bill C-68 which became the current *Firearms Act* in 1995 under the Chretien government which replaced the FAC with the current licensure scheme and introduced the Long Gun Registry, Bill C-19 in 2012 under the Harper

government which repealed the Long Gun Registry...the list goes on. More recent legislation like **SOR/2020-96**, the so-called ‘May 1, 2020 Order in Council’, brought about additional firearms classification changes. And more recent proposed legislation like **Bill C-21** which, as of July 1 is still before the House and has not been proclaimed or come into force, promises to bring more of the same. **A recent announcement by the UCP** asserting Alberta's intent to handle charges involving the Federal *Firearms Act* rather than the federal government underlines the general environment of confusion.

Contributing to the complexity is the fact that some license holders have special conditions such as 12(x) endorsements which enable them to do things that other license holders cannot.

Legislation is a complex business is our point here, and something you think you might have understood or have remembered correctly might not have come into force yet, may have been altered by later legislation, may have been repealed, might apply differently in that instance, or you might simply have a flawed recall and/or understanding.

## Second, firearm appearances are tricky

And it's not just legislation that can be tricky, some firearms are very similar in appearance to others and something that seems like a prohibited firearm might actually be something else. Along the same lines, a firearm in some instances may legally be able to use a magazine with a capacity that is not permitted in other instances. It's not often as straightforward as it seems.



# PROHIBITED FIREARMS FROM ITS RANGES?

## Leave law enforcement to do its job

Because of this inherent opportunity for confusion, and because of the potential downsides for getting it wrong, it is not appropriate for us as an organization to try to interpret firearms legislation for anyone else. Our intention instead is to simply leave law enforcement to do its job.

It is *also* inappropriate in our view for someone to interpret the law for someone *else*. Here, we're referring to one member reporting another member to law enforcement based on what they *think* they saw or *think* they know. (Believe it or not, we have already had this happen). With administrative offences where there's a *massive* boundary for misjudgement like this, it's best that you simply mind your own business and leave law enforcement to do its job.

At best, reporting a fellow member puts someone who may be innocent and law-abiding in an uncomfortable and expensive situation. At *worst*, it could indirectly lead to a negative reaction by law enforcement that escalates to the CFO's office and endangers our range certification.

Instead, our expectations are placed on the individual member to personally educate themselves about applicable laws and regulations and govern themselves according to that understanding. We say this right in our **Membership Terms and Conditions**.

## Shouldn't the rules say something about prohibited firearms though?

No, not really.

The purpose of our **Facility Rules** is the safety of our members and their guests, as well as general harmony.

## So it's just a free-for-all out there then?

No, that's not the case at all.

We *will enforce* rules specific to our range certifications, such as the types of shooting permitted on each range.

Further, if you see someone poaching, or committing a violent crime, or engaging in theft or vandalism we absolutely expect that you would report those instances where and when you see them.

## Don't forget—we're all in this together

As firearms owners we should be looking to band together, regardless of what we shoot, and support the continuation of the shooting sports (and yes hunting, which is done the vast majority of the time with a firearm, most definitely is a shooting sport).

When there's a leak in the boat it doesn't matter whether the leak is at your end or not, you're just as much at risk of sinking as everyone else if you don't pitch in with the bailing. And it doesn't help anyone if you start splashing water back in.

## In summary

No, the SPFGA has not banned prohibited firearms from the facility.



# DONATIONS AND AFFILIATIONS IN 2022

The SPFGA has a long history of supporting partner organizations aligned with its mission. Historically, decisions about which organizations it supported were largely made on the membership's behalf by the Board.

## Member-directed donations

Starting with 2022 membership renewals, we moved some of this donation decision-making into your hands.

To set this in motion, we began by reviewing and selecting ten potential candidate organizations based on alignment with our mission statement. Then, in the [October 7, 2021 issue of \*Bullet Points\*](#), we asked you to rank these organizations in your order of preference.

The ranking poll remained in the field for six weeks with regular reminders, the results of which were reported in the [November 28 issue of \*Bullet Points\*](#). We received responses from 405 members, from which the four top-ranking organizations were selected:

- Alberta Conservation Association (**ACA**),
- Alberta Fish and Game Association (**AFGA**),
- Alberta Hunter Education Instructor Association (**AHEIA**), and
- Canadian Coalition for Firearm Rights (**CCFR**).

These organizations became the four options you're presented with to direct the donation portion of your membership to when you joined or renewed for 2022:

Part of our annual budget includes donations to outside agencies that support key objectives of the SPFGA. It is important to the Board to get some direction from the membership on their priorities. Please indicate which of the following options you would prefer to direct your portion of these funds towards:\*

- ☒ 1. Alberta Conservation Association
- ☐ 2. Alberta Fish and Game Association
- ☐ 3. Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association
- ☐ 4. Canadian Coalition for Firearm Rights

Following the closure of 2022 membership sales on October 1, the donations from your choices totalled as follows:

<b>CCFR</b> (selected by 50.6% of members):	\$23,790
<b>AFGA</b> (selected by 23.3% of members):	\$11,140
<b>ACA</b> (selected by 17.7% of members):	\$8,440
<b>AHEIA</b> (selected by 8.4% members):	\$4,030

## Club-directed affiliations

At the club level, we continued our previously budgeted donations in affiliation and support of the follow partners. The Narrow Lake Conservation Center is where the Narrow Lake Youth Conservation Camp (NLYCC) and Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) programs are

run each year. The Wildlife Trust Fund is a conservation land trust administrated by the AFGA.

Canadian Coalition for Firearm Rights (CCFR):	\$4,000
Narrow Lake Conservation Center (NLCC):	\$5,000
AFGA Wildlife Trust Fund (WTF):	\$4,000

## Updates from these partners on their current projects

We reached out to these aligned partners to get a quick update about their current projects and what your member dollars are going to support. We wanted to share what we've heard back.

## ACA

These funds will be put towards a beautiful piece of land that we are attempting to acquire in southern Alberta.

The site is located approximately 75 km south of Medicine Hat and is 640 acres in size. It is also adjacent to ACA's existing 160-acre Manyberries Creek Conservation Site so would allow for a significant expansion in conserved habitat. Manyberries Creek meanders through the east side of the site and there are a variety of habitat types including creek bottom, grassland, hayland and cropland.



In keeping with our typical approach to other sites, the hayland would likely remain while the cropland would be restored back to native prairie. Gamebird species found in the area include ring-necked pheasant, sharptailed grouse and Hungarian partridge. Big game species found in the area include, moose, white-tailed deer, mule deer and pronghorn. The area also supports seventeen “at risk” species including sage grouse, Sprague’s pipit, chestnut-collared longspur, burrowing owl and is located in the critical sage grouse habitat area. Native vegetative communities on the site contain chokecherry, saskatoon berry, current, Hawthorne, sagebrush and a variety of native grass species and forbs.

## NLCC

Last year (2021) in addition to the normal maintenance work, three new cabins were constructed and set in place.

They will provide the facility with:

- A barrier free cabin
- A permanent First Aid facility
- A new armory

Also, the initial work on the old kitchen demolition was completed and the interior of the existing cabins were painted.

The NLCC Board of Directors have set aside a significant amount of funds towards the initial work for the design and construction of a new kitchen and a bathroom/shower facility. This is a major undertaking that will require considerable support to complete but is critical to

replace aging facilities and grow the potential of NLCC.

The plan for 2022 was to complete many of the following outstanding items:

- The final demolition of the old kitchen (completed)
- The new cabins carpentry and electrical work (completed)
- The barrier free washroom/shower building outstanding improvement items (completed)
- The overnight camp areas improvements (in progress)
- The replacement of the boat house floor (completed)

We have lots to do and hopefully, within a couple of years, the new kitchen and bathroom/shower facility will be fully funded, and construction will be started. At this point we are working with an architect, and we hope to soon have a completed set of drawings.





## DONATIONS AND AFFILIATIONS IN 2022 (CONTINUED)

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### AHEIA

The Alberta Hunter Education Instructor's Association (AHEIA) would like to thank the Sherwood Park Fish & Game Association for their very generous donation of \$4,030. We are grateful for the confidence this demonstrates and assure your organization that these funds will be faithfully applied to our mutual goals in hunting, fishing, and the many activities that support a safe, enjoyable, and successful outdoor experience.

AHEIA's programs create many opportunities for youth, novices, women, as well as those who are experienced hunters and anglers to participate in programs that provide a greater understanding and respect for Alberta's wildlife and wild places.

### CCFR

The CCFR strives to do the most we can with what we've got. Because of support like yours, we are able to move mountains. Your generous donation is especially poignant at this crucial time for Canadian gun owners. The CCFR is working hard to combat these ill-advised gun bans, Bill C-21 and the Liberal government on many fronts:

- **Federal court action:** we've got the largest federal court challenge ever launched on behalf of gun owners. We've hired the best team and provided support to some of the smaller cases, by funding some of the costs like transcripts, cross examinations etc.
- **TV shows:** Rod hosts a bi-weekly update show on Wild TV with the intent of engaging more gun owners into the fight. It's no secret that our community at large, isn't always on board with each other.

- **Election projects:** the best way to preserve our sport and lifestyle for the future is a new government. We've had some massive election projects the last two elections, and with all signs pointing to an upcoming spring election, we're going to need all the help we can get to unseat some of the vulnerable liberal ridings and win. This takes considerable resources
- **Continuing public education:** probably the most important long-term project to create more lasting change on the public's perception of guns and their owners. This includes National Range Day, explainer video series, social media, CCFR Women's Program and Ladies Range Days and a wide variety of other materials and projects aimed at normalizing legal gun ownership in Canada

Without your help we couldn't accomplish any of these and we'd be forced to watch as we lose our ability to own and enjoy the shooting sports.

So, from every corner of our membership, supporter base, volunteer team, Board of Directors and executive, and from Rod and I directly, thank you. Really, thank you for your trust and faith in us.

We're going to do literally everything possible to save our sport.

### AFGA and WTF

We contacted the AFGA for an update on the projects our \$15,140 donation has gone to support. The AFGA has not replied.

## LET'S TALK ABOUT AFGA AFFILIATION

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Talking about this starts with a review of this matter's relevant history.

To begin, it's necessary to understand who everybody is. The Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) is a provincial-level confederation of local fish and game clubs. Its historic role has been to act as the collective voice for smaller clubs across the province. The SPFGA,

when it and the AFGA were both young organizations, would affiliate as a confederated club within the AFGA. This arrangement continued through the decades.

In 2020 the AFGA, then in dire financial straits, sought an increase in its affiliation fees from its clubs, explaining the backstory of its financial woes. The members of the SPFGA supported this increase in assistance of

the AFGA, with the proviso that the AFGA use the opportunity to bring its financial house in order.

It was disappointing therefore when we found out in February of 2021 that the AFGA, in review of its internal governance documents, confirmed that it did not consider you as an SPFGA member to be a member of the AFGA at all, despite charging a fee for affiliation. On the basis of this revelation in the [February 28, 2021 issue of Bullet Points](#), we polled you to see if you wanted to continue affiliation with the AFGA for 2021 or find a different partner.

We received [responses from just over 400 members](#), one of the higher poll response rates we'd experienced. Of the respondents, 154 members (38.1%) felt we should affiliate with a different partner for 2021, 59 (14.6%) felt we should maintain affiliation with the AFGA, and 180 (44.6%) indicated they trusted the Board to choose on their behalf. Having only 14.6% of members indicating clear support for affiliation raised questions for the Board whether this was truly representative of the membership's interests.



The Board received a presentation from the AFGA to hear its case for the SPFGA continuing to affiliate and in [April of 2021](#) decided to renew its affiliation for that year. This came with the expectation that the AFGA reach certain milestones of progress in order to support a decision to continue affiliation further.

In [March of 2022](#), following extensive discussions the Board made the decision not to affiliate with the AFGA in 2022. An extensive [background](#) on this was circulated to the membership at that time. This decision freed up the \$140,000 that had been budgeted for 2022 AFGA affiliation.

It's important to recognize that we didn't end our relationship with the AFGA though—the AFGA remains a valued partner aligned with our mission, and we continue to support them. We simply provide that support in a different manner than we have traditionally. As discussed in this issue, we maintain our support of the Wildlife Trust Fund, the land trust administrated by the AFGA. Additionally, the new member-directed donation process that we started this year also directly supports the AFGA.

These supports draw from those funds previously budgeted for affiliation. Similarly, we purchase our corporate and member liability insurance from those funds as well, a necessary step as these had historically obtained through affiliation with the AFGA.

The remainder of the affiliation funds went into general club revenue. Thankfully these were on hand this year, as they covered the unexpected increases in operating costs we experienced because of inflation and supply chain issues. Without the presence of these funds, we wouldn't have been able to [accomplish as much as we have in 2022](#) and would have had to choose between cutting services in 2023 or bringing in an even larger membership fee increase.

The Board reviewed the question of resuming the traditional AFGA affiliation again at their December 2022 meeting, confirming that the concerns which led to the decision not to affiliate in 2022 were still principally unresolved: the drivers of the AFGA's financial troubles, representation and equality of SPFGA members within the AFGA, and the uncertain value proposition in traditional affiliation. The Board determined that despite some encouraging movement in the AFGA updating its bylaws and objects recently, these were small and incremental in comparison to the scale of the required changes. As such, the Board reaffirmed its position to continue the new affiliation path and will not give the matter further consideration until such time as a solid business case can be presented to them to do so.





## Ethan Maschmeyer

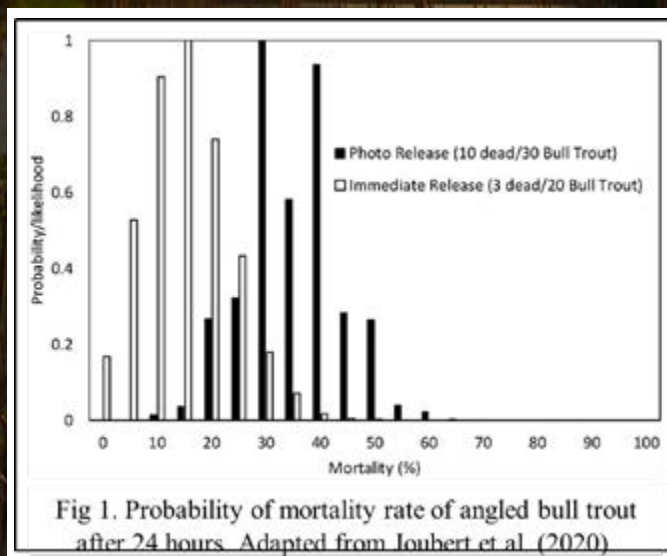
For many people, fishing is more than a simple hobby or sport but an integral part of their identity. Whether fishing is for food or fun, getting a day out on the water is a great way to enjoy nature and spend quality time with family and friends. However, fishing also comes with a great deal of responsibility, specifically in conserving the aquatic ecosystem. Angler behaviour can be either supportive or incredibly destructive of aquatic ecosystems, making it critical that anglers respect fishing regulations and minimize their impact. Historically, unrestricted angling has been harmful to many native Albertan species and ecosystems, specifically the survival of the bull trout.

Bull trout are an apex predator in North American freshwater ecosystems, playing a vital role in controlling predator-prey interactions throughout the trophic levels. According to Sinnatamby et al. (2019), bull trout were historically found in high densities throughout Alberta, specifically in the North and South Saskatchewan rivers. However, due to this high species density, bull trout became an easy target for anglers in the 19th and 20th centuries and nearly got harvested to extinction. Not only was the bull trout overharvested, but industrial development also added to the stresses on the bull trout population as tens of thousands of kilometers of stream habitats have been destroyed or fragmented in the pursuit of natural resources (Maitland et al., 2016). This accelerated the decline of the bull trout populations as they were being excessively targeted by anglers while also losing access to breeding, feeding, and wintering habitats. The decline in abundance of the bull trout had devastating and lasting implications on the freshwater ecosystems of Alberta as this species plays an essential role in asserting top-down control as an aquatic predator, defining many interspecies relationships (Sinnatamby et al., 2019). Therefore, efforts must be made to protect this critical species and ensure the stability of freshwater environments.

Anglers play an influential role in the conservation and protection of the bull trout species through respect for fishing regulations and knowledgeable handling of fish. Since the 1990s, strict fishing regulations have been imposed across Alberta to reduce the fishing-related mortality of bull trout (Parker et al., 2007). These

regulations came in the form of retention limits, catch and release regulations, and restricted access to bull trout habitats. A study by Parker et al. (2007) found that restricting access to lakes is the most successful method to increase bull trout abundance as this is the only method that reduces both harvesting of bull trout and incidental mortality through improper fish handling. Meanwhile, road-accessible lakes with only catch and release regulations were found to have minimal improvements in bull trout abundance, which was most likely due to incidental mortalities from improper fish handling or poaching of fish. Therefore, it is crucial that anglers not only respect and follow fishing regulations but are also knowledgeable about how to properly handle fish and minimize harm.

Catch and release regulations are intended to reduce fish mortality while still allowing recreational fishing, yet they often fail to adequately address post-release mortality from excessive air exposure. Joubert et al. (2020) investigated how prolonged handling time, associated with taking photos and measuring the bull trout, influences the fish's survival rate. This study found that extended air exposure resulted in 33% post-release mortality, while the immediate release of the bull trout resulted in only 15% post-release mortality (Fig 1).





# REVIVING OUR FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS: THE ANGLER'S ROLE IN BULL TROUT CONSERVATION



## REVIVING OUR FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS: THE ANGLER'S ROLE IN BULL TROUT CONSERVATION (CONTINUED)

These results emphasize the importance of minimizing the trauma inflicted on a fish by focusing on careful and efficient fish-handling skills. These skills are especially important when handling vulnerable species, such as the bull trout, in order to best support species conservation and improvements in abundance.

Bull trout are a fundamental component of Alberta's history and the survival of freshwater ecosystems, making it vital that anglers take action to protect and conserve this species. Through respect for fishing regulations and proper fish handling, the bull trout population will have a better opportunity to increase in abundance and assume its rightful position in the freshwater ecosystems of Alberta.



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### Special Note

Ethan Maschmeyer is a student at MacEwan University and is the 2022 recipient of the [Dean and Nina Ozanne Academic Excellence Award in Biological Sciences](#). Dean Ozanne is a long-time member of the SPFGA and his generous personal donation to MacEwan University supports this award. One of the award's requirements is that its recipient complete a volunteer project with the SPFGA. Ethan submitted this scholarly work in fulfilment of this volunteering requirement.

Last year's recipient, Megan Foxcroft, was the 2021 (and first) recipient of this award. Megan's volunteer project was reviewing our Facility Rules and drawing up a pool of examination questions for use in the facility and safety orientation that all members must take when renewing for 2023.



# BEST TO HAVE YOUR OWN EMAIL ADDRESS

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We have observed that some members use their work email address for club communications. Staying informed about club matters, particularly facility-related information that we send out via *Safe and Sound* emails, is challenging if you're only receiving them during the workday when you aren't on vacation.

Similarly, a family sharing a single email address can be challenging. Virtual meetings and remote voting will be a continuing reality for us going forward.



We encourage you to obtain and use personal email for club updates instead. There are [many options for setting up a free email available](#), and we encourage you to explore these.

If you would like to update your email address, you can do this directly yourself [on the website](#) by logging into your profile.

## DID YOU KNOW?

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*These **Did You Know?** articles, suggested by you as a source of quick reminders, highlight specific facility rules and briefly explaining their reasoning.*

This **Did You Know?** deals with etiquette and picking up after oneself.

*Did you know that it is the responsibility of each member to leave the area they've used clean and ready for the next person?*



In the Etiquette section of the Facility Rules is the requirement that, prior to departing the range shed, you must remove your targets from the target boards. Your spent casings must be picked up as well, using the brooms, magnets and dustpans provided.

It's everyone's responsibility to ensure the facility is maintained in the excellent shape we'd like to find it in.



# ***“WHAT ARE YOUR HOURS?” WELL, THE ANSWER TO THAT VARIES...***

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Members often ask about our hours, looking for clarification.

In terms of the office, we're open 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Monday to Friday each week.

In terms of the facility, Ketchamoot Creek is open and accessible 24x7 unless there's a need to close it.

The firearms ranges themselves have their own hours – shooting may begin at 9 a.m. daily, and the end time varies with the time of year. Range hours are listed in the Range Hours section here in this issue, on the website [Facility Rules page](#) or posted at the gate. The archery range may be used from sunrise to sunset daily.

## **RANGE HOURS**

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Shooting hours begin at **9:00 a.m. daily** and end according to the following:

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**2nd Sunday in March – April 14**

**6:30 p.m.**

**April 15 – September 21**

**8:00 p.m.**

**September 22 – 1st Saturday in November**

**6:30 p.m.**

**1st Sunday in November – 2nd Saturday in March**

**4:30 p.m.**

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All firing must cease at the posted hours. These times are posted at the gate, on the website and in the newsletter. In the case of disagreement in times posted, the information on the website is to be taken as correct.

## **CHECK THE EVENTS CALENDAR**

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We have many amenities at our facility that our members use. It's fairly common for us to have received bookings for them, so to avoid frustration or surprises, [\*\*make sure you've checked the Events Calendar on the website before leaving to come out.\*\*](#)



# WILDLIFE ISSUES—WHO TO CALL?

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Fairly regularly, we receive questions in the office regarding who to contact regarding issues with wildlife. Below is a contact list based on animal type:

- For issues with migratory birds (e.g. – ducks, geese), contact **Canadian Wildlife Services at 1-800-668-6767**
- For issues with large wildlife (e.g. – bears, cougars, moose, etc.) contact **“Report a Poacher” at 1-800-642-3800**
- For issues with smaller animals such as squirrels or skunks —these are dealt with on your own, or third-party animal removal company can help with the issue.











## It sifts from leaden sieves

*Emily Dickinson*

It reaches to the fence,  
It wraps it, rail by rail,  
Till it is lost in fleeces;  
It flings a crystal veil

On stump and stack and stem,—  
The summer's empty room,  
Acres of seams where harvests were,  
Recordless, but for them...



**SHERWOOD PARK**  
FISH AND GAME ASSOCIATION



@spfga



@shpkfga



@spfga

Editor: Roland Coppens  
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