How GOABC Has Contributed to Wildlife Management in British Columbia

Guide Outfitters
Association of British Columbia
Wildlife Stewardship is our Priority
OUR LEGACY

Sometimes when you are so busy doing the work you don’t have time to reflect on how much work is being done. The GOABC is great at doing the work but sometimes poor on the communication or reporting back to the membership on what has been accomplished. This document is meant to be a reflection of some of the conservation work that has been accomplished by GOABC and our members over the past few years. This is only a small sampling of the stewardship work that GOABC and member outfitters have accomplished. There are countless regional projects completed by outfitters within their own territories that go unnoticed and are never published.

At the 50th anniversary of GOABC convention in 2016, we honored our long-term outfitter families with Legacy Awards. Some families have been in the outfitting business for more than 70 years - acting as caretakers and stewards of their guide territories. It is these families that are the “grass roots” of the association and the heart of our conservation work. Join with us at the 2017 convention as we celebrate our “Conservation at Work.”

Signed by the Board of Directors 2017
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INTRODUCTION

The Guide Outfitters Association of British Columbia (GOABC) was established in 1966 to represent the guide outfitting industry to government, and advocate for science-based wildlife management. The GOABC represents 60-70% of guide outfitters in the province, who together employ over 2,000 people, and are responsible for approximately $116 million of annual economic activity in British Columbia.

The vision of the GOABC is a province with a strong and stable guide outfitting industry, and abundant big game populations for all to enjoy, both today, and in the future.

The GOABC has always been a strong proponent of the North American Wildlife Conservation Model, which has proven to be an effective framework for managing wildlife that was founded by hunter-conservationists. It stipulates that law and science should be utilized in harmony to manage wildlife; that has always been a keystone of GOABC policy.

The GOABC is an organization that supports sustainable use and is passionate about advancing conservation efforts. In this spirit, we have hosted wildlife symposiums, supported various conservation initiatives, advocated for prudent sustainable use of wildlife, and started the Wildlife DNA Collection Program. We are doing our part to enhance the role that hunters play in wildlife management.

In order for us to be successful at helping maintain wildlife for future generations, hunters need to support long-term management decisions that are good for wildlife and their habitat.
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Guide outfitters are the founders of the tourism industry in British Columbia, with many guide outfitting businesses dating back to the 1850s. Several original families are still in the industry.

The GOABC (first incorporated as the Western Guides and Outfitters Association) began to collaborate with government and the Conservation Officer Service to establish a regulatory framework that would benefit wildlife species in British Columbia. During the 1980s and 1990s, guide outfitters worked with government on land use planning, which was an important process for recognizing the various pressures on British Columbia’s rural landscape.

Guide outfitters have always taken great pride in their guide territories. They spend many hours afield, gaining crucial knowledge of the habitat and wildlife within their area and tracking changes in herd health and population levels. The GOABC continues to represent outfitters at provincial regulation and policy tables. Sound science based decisions are made regarding wildlife management that are informed by our members’ experience in the field. It truly is wildlife stewardship in action. Our logo says it all “wildlife stewardship is our priority.”

The GOABC wishes to recognize the provincial government for fulfilling its commitment to science based wildlife management in British Columbia. We look forward to the future as we continue to help protect and grow this valuable wildlife resource.
WILDLIFE DNA PROGRAM

Solid scientific data is one of the foundations for wildlife management under the North American Wildlife Conservation Model. Since guide outfitters reside in their territory the “majority of the time,” they are in a unique position to gather information on wildlife. To capitalize on guide outfitters knowledge and fill the need for quality information, the GOABC was prompted by Dr. Marco Marra, of the Genome Sciences Centre, to initiate its own scientific data collection program. The GOABC funded DNA program provides a meaningful opportunity for outfitters to get involved in wildlife management and participate in citizen science by having them collect DNA samples from the animals they have harvested.

DNA sequencing can provide insight into landscape genetics, wildlife demographics and evolutionary processes. It can help to monitor population health, size, and identify important environmental factors which can affect management and conservation plans for the wildlife species.

TO DATE: 1,700 FTA cards purchased since 2012

GOABC members have been supplied with DNA Collection Kits to use for collecting blood samples from the animals they harvest since the program began in 2012. It is a relatively simple but important step of putting two drops of blood on a FTA (sample) card. The resulting samples have been cataloged and properly stored at GOABC until the next phase of DNA sequencing can begin. By contributing to the collection of wildlife DNA samples, guide outfitters are able to add valuable resources and data to aid in the development of regulations and allocations.

Technology is continuously evolving, allowing us to refine our understanding of wildlife and the habitat they rely on. By learning how to use these new technologies, and working with professional biologists and wildlife managers, the GOABC is embracing a long-term vision for how we manage wildlife.
INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM 1 - 2011

Managing Wildlife in the Next Century

25 INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS
In December 2011, the GOABC held its first International Wildlife Management Symposium, Managing Wildlife in the Next Century. Bringing together conservation experts and biologists from around the globe, the symposium explored different ways of balancing social, political, economic and environmental pressures on wildlife management.

The symposium hoped to trigger a fundamental shift among hunters from caring about hunting to caring about wildlife. In order to appeal to the “70% in the middle,” hunters need to be dedicated to wildlife stewardship, concerned about hunter ethics, and create economic benefits within their communities. We need to make decisions that put wildlife first, and speak in a language that non-hunters will understand.

Managing Wildlife in the Next Century was a springboard for those in attendance, providing both inspirational and practical “take aways” on getting the balance right. Although the topics covered in the symposium were diverse, several themes regarding challenges and opportunities in the next century emerged.

**TOPICS INCLUDED:**

- Landscape level management
- The “70% in the middle”
- Predator/Prey relationships
- The future role of guide outfitters in wildlife management
- Social pressures on wildlife management decisions
- The importance of “Fair” in Fair Chase
The GOABC hosted its second International Wildlife Management Symposium, Stewardship in Action, on June 18 and 19, 2014, in Richmond, British Columbia, Canada. The event was attended by biologists, government staff, guide outfitters, hunters, non-hunters, conservation leaders, and First Nations. The goal of the symposium was to build upon the lessons from the first symposium, digging deeper into challenging topics where opinions are varied. When we take the time to learn from other wildlife experts, it increases our knowledge and understanding which then improves how wildlife is managed in British Columbia.

**SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS INCLUDED:**

- Investigating the Overkill Hypothesis for Grizzly Bears in British Columbia
- First Nations Perspectives on Stewardship
- Trophies. The Good, the Bad and the Frustrating.
- Restoring Value to BC’s Land Use Plans
- South Africa Becoming the World’s Model for Sustainable Conservation
- Using DNA Analysis to Support Wildlife Management
- Grizzly Inventory in BC: Past, Present, and Future
- Educating the Next Generation of Wildlife Managers

The symposium speakers reminded attendees that the goal of wildlife management should not simply be to help grow large populations. Since landscapes have limited carrying capacities, we know that a large wildlife population is not necessarily a healthy one. When we talk about wildlife science, we must talk about more than just numbers; we must think holistically and explore various aspects of wildlife health.

Above all, we must ensure that wildlife has value. People respect and protect things of value; this has been proven with many wildlife species from around the world. Despite our differences, we all share the dream of spectacular landscapes and healthy wildlife populations for future generations to enjoy. We all agree that conservation matters™.
In November of 2006, the GOABC, together with our partners the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (FNAWS), Grand Slam Club Ovis and the Wild Sheep Society of British Columbia, hosted a workshop at the Coast Inn of the North in Prince George. The intent of the workshop was to bring together people of various backgrounds who were knowledgeable and passionate about Stone’s sheep (Ovis dalli stonei) who would then propose and discuss strategies to address the future needs of Stone’s sheep in British Columbia. Attendees at the workshop included our own outfitter members, government officials from region and headquarters, recreational sheep hunters, members of the naturalist community and consultants.

Since British Columbia is home to 85% of the world’s population of Stone’s sheep, we all have a special responsibility to ensure that this species are not at risk from human encroachment. We believe there are ways to manage the landscape for energy and other resources that we all value while maintaining Stone’s sheep for future generations.

Several recommendations covering such issues as mapping critical ranges for use by industry, managing recreation and agricultural practices, changes in forage competition and forest dynamics, and predation were developed during the workshop and put together into a summary document that was then forwarded to government ministers responsible for land use and development.
WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP SERIES II
WOODLAND CARIBOU – MOVING FORWARD

An Action Plan for Woodland Caribou

The GOABC hosted the second annual workshop in the Wildlife Stewardship Series December 11 and 12, 2007 at the Coast Inn of the North in Prince George. The event was attended by guide outfitters, government wildlife managers from region and headquarters, First Nations, consultants, industry representatives, commercial and non-commercial motorized recreation interests, resident hunters, and a representative from the Federation of BC Naturalists.

After presentations from experts in caribou biology concerning current management issues and population trends, attendees were asked to provide recommendations to assist in recovery efforts. There was general support amongst attendees for the direction of recovery planning for caribou and recommendations were put forward that focused on habitat protection, recreation management and predator reduction.
In December 2008 GOABC, with funding from the Wild Sheep Foundation, hosted a workshop at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, British Columbia. The purpose of the workshop was to gather information from various sources that had a qualified knowledge of mountain goats (Oreamnos americanus) and their ecology. Following the presentations put forward by biologists from British Columbia, Alberta, Alaska, and Wyoming, along with a presentation from our own association, we analyzed the common issues and proposed solutions to the problems currently facing mountain goats in British Columbia.

Mountain goats are considered by some to be the true mascot for a “Super, Natural British Columbia.” Living in harsh terrain, they are an inspiration to anyone who has the chance to observe them in their natural environment. Overall mountain goat populations are stable throughout the province but certain localized populations are under pressure.

Working groups were asked to formulate recommendations to improve mountain goat management with a focus on population inventories and trending, access management, predators and harvest rates.

The end result of the workshop was a set of recommendations that could have a positive effect on the status of mountain goat populations in British Columbia.
WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP SERIES IV
MOOSE – PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

An Action Plan for the Moose

In November 2009, the GOABC hosted Wildlife Stewardship Series IV: Moose Management at Royal Roads University in Victoria, British Columbia. The goal of the workshop was to increase local knowledge of moose and enhance moose management for the future. Workshop participants included guide outfitters, wildlife managers and biologists.

British Columbia harbours one of the most diverse big game populations in the world, including a significant portion of North America’s moose (Alces alces). Moose are a valued resource for all British Columbians and an important part of the wildlife heritage of the Canadian northwest.

Issues such as increased access to habitat due to resource industries, lack of reporting on harvest numbers, lack of funding to monitor moose populations, the benefits of harvesting bears in moose areas and controlling wolf predation were discussed by the participants and recommendations were developed to help local biologists and wildlife managers improve moose management in British Columbia.

“A commitment to the North American Wildlife Conservation Model would improve moose management in BC. The model outlines management principles and stipulates that law and science should be the foundation for wildlife management.”

GUIDE OUTFITTERS ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
In July 2016, the GOABC developed and released a comprehensive moose management plan that identifies and recommends best practices to protect and enhance moose populations throughout British Columbia. First Nations, local hunters, and the outfitting industry all rely on healthy moose populations. Many of these stakeholders had been noticing a significant decline of moose over the past few years, by as much as 70% in some areas. It was clear that immediate action was needed to ensure the health of this important wildlife species. The GOABC contracted several expert biologists to write the *Moose Enhancement and Recovery Strategy*. This paper clearly set out recommendations designed to complement the existing management strategies and add goals and regional objectives for moose recovery.

**SOME OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE:**

- Establish moose density and composition objectives for each moose game management zone.
- Incorporate hunter harvest information and outfitter declarations to improve population estimates.
- Encourage First Nations to take a leadership role in moose recovery by improving harvest reporting from their people.

- Develop regional density target for predators.
- Develop maximum road density targets for the landscape.
- Provide incentives for forest companies to enhance moose habitat during harvesting and replanting.
GRIZZLY BEAR MANAGEMENT REPORT

In December 2016 the GOABC released a fact based report regarding Grizzly Bear Management in British Columbia. The GOABC strongly advocates for science-based wildlife management and wants decision-makers to value wildlife and their habitat in land use decisions.

Grizzly bears are classified as a species of “Special Concern,” which indicates that they are neither threatened nor endangered, but their populations are recognized as sensitive to changes in habitat.

British Columbia’s grizzly bear hunt has been under intense scrutiny since 1976. The regulatory organizations (COSEWIC, IUCN, CITES, FLRNO), International Bear Association and the general public all continuously monitor the grizzly bear hunt and management procedures in British Columbia. The hunt is able to continue because the science surrounding the population estimates is strong, all non-hunting mortality is considered, and the conservative harvest is allowed – only where the population can sustain a hunt.

The GOABC wants the grizzly bear population to thrive in British Columbia. We believe that a highly regulated and sustainable hunt benefits local communities and the species. It is our hope that we will find ways to work together, as we move forward, to ensure the continued health and abundance of British Columbia’s grizzly bears for all our citizens, whether or not they choose to hunt.

DID YOU KNOW:

• Approximately 35% of British Columbia, an area roughly the size of Finland, is currently closed entirely to grizzly bear hunting, including 50% of the Great Bear Rainforest.

• British Columbia boasts some of the highest densities of large predators in North America with an estimated 15,000 grizzly bears, 120,000–160,000 black bears, and 8,500 wolves.

• Recent studies from the provincial Ministry have confirmed a population estimate of 15,000 grizzly bears in the province of which hunters harvest less than 2% of the total grizzly bear population (an average harvest of 272 bears annually over the last 5 years).
In a civilized and cultivated country, wild animals only continue to exist at all when preserved by sportsmen. The excellent people who protest against all hunting and consider sportsmen as enemies of wildlife are ignorant of the fact that in reality the genuine sportsman is, by all odds, the most important factor in keeping the larger and more valuable wild creatures from total extinction.

– THEODORE ROOSEVELT

The Hunting Preservation Fund (HPF) was established by GOABC to help ensure that non-residents and residents will continue to have the opportunity to hunt with a guide in British Columbia. GOABC members in British Columbia charge their hunters a fee which is collected by the outfitter, held in-trust for GOABC and remitted at year end.

Hunting is coming under increasing pressure in British Columbia. While animal rights activists appear to be focusing on bear hunting, their long-term objective is to stop all hunting. The Hunting Preservation Fund is dedicated to advocating for the guide outfitting industry, wildlife stewardship initiatives, public outreach and demonstrating the role of hunting in wildlife conservation.
Food security and access to healthy food should be of concern to everyone, and legally harvesting our wild resources can play a big role in achieving these goals. Modern society increasingly demands healthier food and more humane treatment of the animals we consume. Wild protein harvest is one of the most healthy and ecologically sustainable methods of food procurement, and is an integral part of our diet, culture and economy.

The Wild Harvest Initiative, led by Shane Mahoney, a leading international authority on wildlife conservation, is working to estimate the value of recreational wild protein harvested from hunters and anglers across the United States and Canada. The multi-year project will measure the biomass of wild protein harvested and assess the nutritional, cultural and economic value of the harvest as well as the ecological costs of hypothetically replacing this food through modern agriculture.

Funded by a coalition of hunting organizations including GOABC, the Wild Harvest Initiative has the potential to change the conversation about the benefits of hunting and angling and the value of our wild lands and waters. GOABC is pleased to be a part of this milestone project.

For more information visit: **www.conservationvisions.com**
The Okanagan Guides Association in partnership with other stakeholders and led by local guide Marc Hubbard helped to bring the dream of a protected area for California bighorn sheep to reality. The guides dedicated their time and resources to this project helping to complete the layout and drafting boundaries of the new WMA which is now known as the McTaggart-Cowan Wildlife Management Area. This WMA has regionally significant habitat values for wildlife, and its name honours long-time conservationist Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan and the Penticton Indian Band. It contains a large area of contiguous, generally non-roaded habitat, which includes lambing areas, escape terrain, and winter and spring foraging areas for California bighorn sheep. The WMA also provides winter habitat for mule deer, elk, and mountain goats.

The following is a list of projects that GOABC has partnered or partially funded or that were initiated by member outfitters.

**McTAGGART-COWAN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA**

The Okanagan Guides Association in partnership with other stakeholders and led by local guide Marc Hubbard helped to bring the dream of a protected area for California bighorn sheep to reality. The guides dedicated their time and resources to this project helping to complete the layout and drafting boundaries of the new WMA which is now known as the McTaggart-Cowan Wildlife Management Area. This WMA has regionally significant habitat values for wildlife, and its name honours long-time conservationist Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan and the Penticton Indian Band. It contains a large area of contiguous, generally non-roaded habitat, which includes lambing areas, escape terrain, and winter and spring foraging areas for California bighorn sheep. The WMA also provides winter habitat for mule deer, elk, and mountain goats.
SOUTHERN ROCKIES GRIZZLY BEAR POPULATION UNIT RESEARCH PROJECT

The South Rockies Grizzly Project in British Columbia seeks to research “bottom-up” effects on bears, such as habitat or prey availability, as well as “top-down” effects like hunting and human development. The goal of the project is to balance hunting opportunity, human safety and conservation risk for grizzly bears in the southern Rocky Mountains of British Columbia. Over the past year, researchers in British Columbia have monitored population size in the South Rockies and Flathead units using hair sampling and genetic analysis to identify bears. Used in conjunction with longterm data, researchers can estimate population trends and address pressing conservation and management concerns.

ELK VALLEY/FLATHEAD GRIZZLY BEAR DNA HAIR SAMPLING PROJECT

Tracking of grizzly bears through DNA analysis started in the 1990s in British Columbia. After years of research both in the U.S. and Canada, the database of individual bears in various ecosystems from Banff National Park to Yellowstone National Park numbers about 5,000. Using hair samples gathered from strategically placed and baited barbed wire traps, DNA can be analyzed and individual bears tracked to help monitor population health and density. This method of study is less invasive and costs less than capture and collaring of bears.

WOLVERINE DNA PROJECT

Wolverines are Blue-listed as a species of special concern by the government of British Columbia but there is a lack of information regarding the population of wolverine in the province, including the southern part of the Kootenays. U.S. populations are on a critical low level and therefore accurate data collection is crucial for species conservation in the adjoining region of BC. This research represents the first on the ground attempt to inventory wolverine populations in the southern Kootenay region. Over 65 sites were set up throughout the region with cameras and hair trap sites to collect DNA samples.

ELK VALLEY ELK COLLARING PROJECT

Stakeholders and residents of the Elk Valley in southern British Columbia have noticed changes in elk migratory trends over recent years. To determine the cause of these changes the Sparwood Fish and Wildlife Association together with local outfitters and the regional biologist applied for funding to capture and radio collar up to 40 adult elk in the area to monitor their movements and survival.
OKANAGAN MOUNTAIN PARK BIGHORN SHEEP TRANSPLANT

From 2005 to 2007, using drop nets and over 50 volunteers, 23 California bighorn sheep, mostly ewes and lambs, were captured from Crater Mountain in the Ashnola River watershed near Keremeos. The sheep were transported by trailer to Peachland and then barged across Okanagan Lake to Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park. A new population of wild sheep was created. This herd is now being tracked and monitored with VHF collars and has experienced excellent survival.

LOWER MAINLAND ROOSEVELT ELK RECOVERY

In Canada, Roosevelt elk are found on Vancouver Island and some pockets of the southwest Lower Mainland. The goal of this complex project was to re-establish healthy and vigorous populations of elk populations while reducing existing conflicts with humans. Elk from urban areas were relocated to 19 priority wilderness areas covering three Forest Districts and eight First Nations traditional territories. The results were dramatic. Total area occupied by elk was increased by 1500% and population size has increased by 380% (380 to 1200 animals).

UNGULATE HABITAT ENHANCEMENT

Near Mackenzie, British Columbia a long time local guide outfitter (Jordy McAuley) decided to initiate a project to improve moose and caribou historical habitat using prescribed burning techniques. A burn can result in dramatic improvements in winter range by opening up the canopy and increasing the forage available. Moose do well on these treated areas, as do elk and goats. Berries come back providing food for bears. Over the next few years, the project team will monitor the burn sites to determine what effect fire has had on forage availability and use by ungulates. When outfitters take a leadership role in restoration projects such as this one it demonstrates to the public the value those in the industry place on stewardship and conservation.

BULL RIVER/WIGWAM FLAT BIGHORN SHEEP HEALTH ASSESSMENT PROJECT

The Southern Guides Association is composed of members operating in the notably abundant and productive Kootenay area. In this region of British Columbia both the grizzly bear and bighorn sheep quotas are closely controlled. The Southern Guides in cooperation with government and other stakeholders have funded projects to assist in assessing the health of the Bull River/Wigwam Flat sheep herd. Conservation is always number one for the GOABC and its members when dealing with wildlife populations.
SHEEP WORK IN PEACE REGION

Northern Guides Association, in cooperation with government and other stakeholders, have been actively involved in projects that are focused on thinhorn mountain sheep population and herd health. One of the biggest risks for Stone’s sheep in northern British Columbia is the potential for interaction with domestic sheep populations, which can spread disease, and pathogens for which the wild herds do not have a defence. This is an important concern in this area and Northern Guides are helping to find a solution.

OMINECA GUIDES AND CITIZEN SCIENCE

Omineca Guide Outfitters Association working with University of Northern British Columbia and professor Roy Rea partially funded a bear scat study which collected 1400 samples in 2014 and 2015 to determine potential moose calf mortality rates from black bears. A moose pellet project starting in spring of 2017 will collect pellets from across north central British Columbia for analysis to determine winter diet items eaten by moose. Determining what moose need in the winter for food will help us make recommendations to the ministry about what needs to be left behind during logging. On a volunteer basis Omineca Guides provide regional biologists with incisor teeth, hair samples, antler measurements and jaw bones from harvested moose for age identification and analysis.

CHILCOTIN HOLIDAYS – KEVAN BRACEWELL

A long time GOABC member, Kevan Bracewell from Chilcotin Holidays, has independently funded and initiated many wildlife stewardship and conservation projects in the Gold Bridge and Lillooet area. Important activities like grizzly bear hair DNA research, invasive plant pulling, wildlife winter range habitat improvement and wildlife population counts are integrated into the guiding and outfitting work making wildlife stewardship a big part of their business. We congratulate Chilcotin Holidays for taking a leadership role in wildlife conservation in British Columbia. The Bracewell family have been guide outfitters for generations and were recently recognized by the GOABC for their 70 years in the outfitting business.

BC TRAPPERS ASSOCIATION – UNGULATE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The B.C. Trappers Association has successfully conducted an Ungulate Enhancement Program for over ten years. This program is to provide incentives for trappers to put more effort into harvesting wolves while they are actively harvesting other furbearers on their traplines. Thanks to the Ungulate Enhancement Program’s wolf harvest, many ungulate species have benefited. Over the years GOABC has been the biggest contributor to this program with over a million dollars contributed to date through various programs throughout the province.
On June 23, 2015 the GOABC hosted their first summit with First Nations on the guide outfitting industry. The goal of the workshop was to demonstrate the employment opportunities for First Nations people and how First Nations could invest in the industry. The workshop was well attended with more than 40 First Nations chiefs or their designates. We heard from First Nations leaders’ with their perspective on current wildlife issues and their desire to be more involved in the guide outfitting industry.

“We found common ground with a shared stewardship interest in the land and a long-term commitment to managing wildlife” says GOABC Aboriginal Chair Darren DeLuca.

Twenty three First Nations own guide territories and that number is growing. Guiding has been a way of life for First Nations and continues to be a key component in keeping their culture and land based knowledge intact. The GOABC looks forward to collaborating with First Nations on more wildlife and guide outfitting opportunities in the future.

The Nisga’a are excited to begin Nisga’a Guide Outfitting and appreciates the GOABC’s initiative to encourage employment and investment opportunities for First Nations in the guide outfitting industry.

— HARRY NYCE JR., NGOLP DIRECTOR
Why Conservation Matters™

We can anticipate that the greatest conflicts in the next century will be over natural resources: timber, oil, minerals, water, fish and wildlife. Conservation is more than just economics or the environment. This is because humans are deeply connected to natural resources, especially wildlife. Primitive paintings that adorn the insides of ancient caves testify to the depth of man’s reverence for wildlife. Despite technology and industrialization, we are not so far removed from this history as we like to think. Our connection with nature is restorative and provides perspective of our significance in the grand scheme of things.

The pressures from natural resource development, a growing human population, and access to the backcountry will all negatively affect wildlife, even if we erect walls of “preservation.” The development of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation helped rescue many wildlife species from the “embers of destruction” and is often called one of the greatest conservation success stories of this century. It is imperative to increase the awareness that large landscape and large species conservation can be helped, by engaging the people who live, work and recreate on those landscapes.

Guide outfitting tenures provide the exclusive right to guide non-residents for big game. Since a guide outfitter is confined to the boundaries of the territory, this creates a long-term sense of conservation and wildlife stewardship. Often outfitters live in and spend thousands of hours within their guiding territory. This provides a vast understanding of the habitat, vegetation, climate, health of many species, and the predator-prey dynamics. Participation in estimating wildlife populations is not a conflict of interest, it is a vested interest. The viability of the guiding industry has been and will continue to be dependent on the health of our wildlife populations.

We are in a position to take a leadership role and take action to demonstrate the value of hunting in wildlife management. Conservation, not preservation, has been demonstrated to be the best model for healthy wildlife populations. Healthy wildlife populations are beneficial to all people. We are obligated to demonstrate to society that conservation matters™.

Shane Mahoney is considered to be one of the leading international authorities on wildlife conservation. He brings to his writings and lectures a profound commitment to rural societies and the sustainable use of natural resources, including fish and wildlife. Visit his website: www.conservationvisions.com

Photo Credit – Shane Mahoney Photography
CONCLUSION

In March 2017 at our annual convention, GOABC will celebrate 51 years as an outfitter association advocating for wildlife. The GOABC has strived to be a leader among outfitting associations balancing organizational performance while in pursuit of conservation. Our top priority is wildlife stewardship, and we endorse the responsible, sustainable and ethical use of the wildlife resource.

The goal of science-based wildlife management is to keep animal populations within a healthy range, based on what the available habitat can support. In the beginning, GOABC worked with government to help establish hunting quotas and allocations that would benefit the species and ensure sustainable wildlife populations. Now, 51 years later, GOABC is an integral part of British Columbia’s wildlife management community, hosting wildlife conservation symposiums, and participating or providing funding for critical research projects and population studies.

The GOABC always put conservation first. We will continue to invest in wildlife conservation efforts. We will continue to collaborate and build relationships with government and like-minded conservation organizations, sharing resources and information to accomplish the goal of healthy wildlife populations. We will strive to be visionaries, placing ourselves at the forefront of issues concerning the environment with goals, strategies, professionalism, science, and “big picture” thinking. We will continue to educate, informing non-hunters about the role of hunting in conservation, encouraging younger generations to get outdoors, and making everyday hunters into dedicated conservationists.

GOABC’s vision is a province with a strong and stable guide outfitting industry, and abundant wildlife populations for all citizens to enjoy, both today and in the future.

PREFERRED CONSERVATION PARTNERS

The GOABC worked to build relationships with several key conservation organizations in the United States for several years before establishing the Preferred Conservation Partners initiative in 2011. We are thankful to be partnered with the Wild Sheep Foundation, Dallas Safari Club, Boone & Crockett, Grand Slam Club/Ovis, Safari Club International, and Bass Pro Shops. The Preferred Conservation Partners program is designed to create synergies between like-minded organizations to advance wildlife stewardship.
WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP PARTNER PROGRAM

Providing $250,000 over 5 years

Last year GOABC announced a 5-year, $250,000 commitment to a new provincial Wildlife Stewardship Partner Program (WSPP), demonstrating the role of the hunter conservationist in wildlife management. The WSPP will provide annual funding of $50,000 per year for outfitter-led wildlife stewardship initiatives.

The WSPP is designed to enhance partnerships between hunters, First Nations and others who care about wildlife. WSPP funds can be used as seed dollars to leverage larger projects, professional fees to design projects for submission to the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and other funding organizations, and education programs on the sustainable use of wildlife. Projects funded in 2016 are:

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<td>Psoroptic Mange in Bighorn Sheep study</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prescribed burn for habitat enhancement</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial</td>
<td>WSF - Take 1 Put 1 Back</td>
<td>$6,763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RMGA - Educational Video production (silver sponsor)</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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PROJECTS FUNDED $49,893
FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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