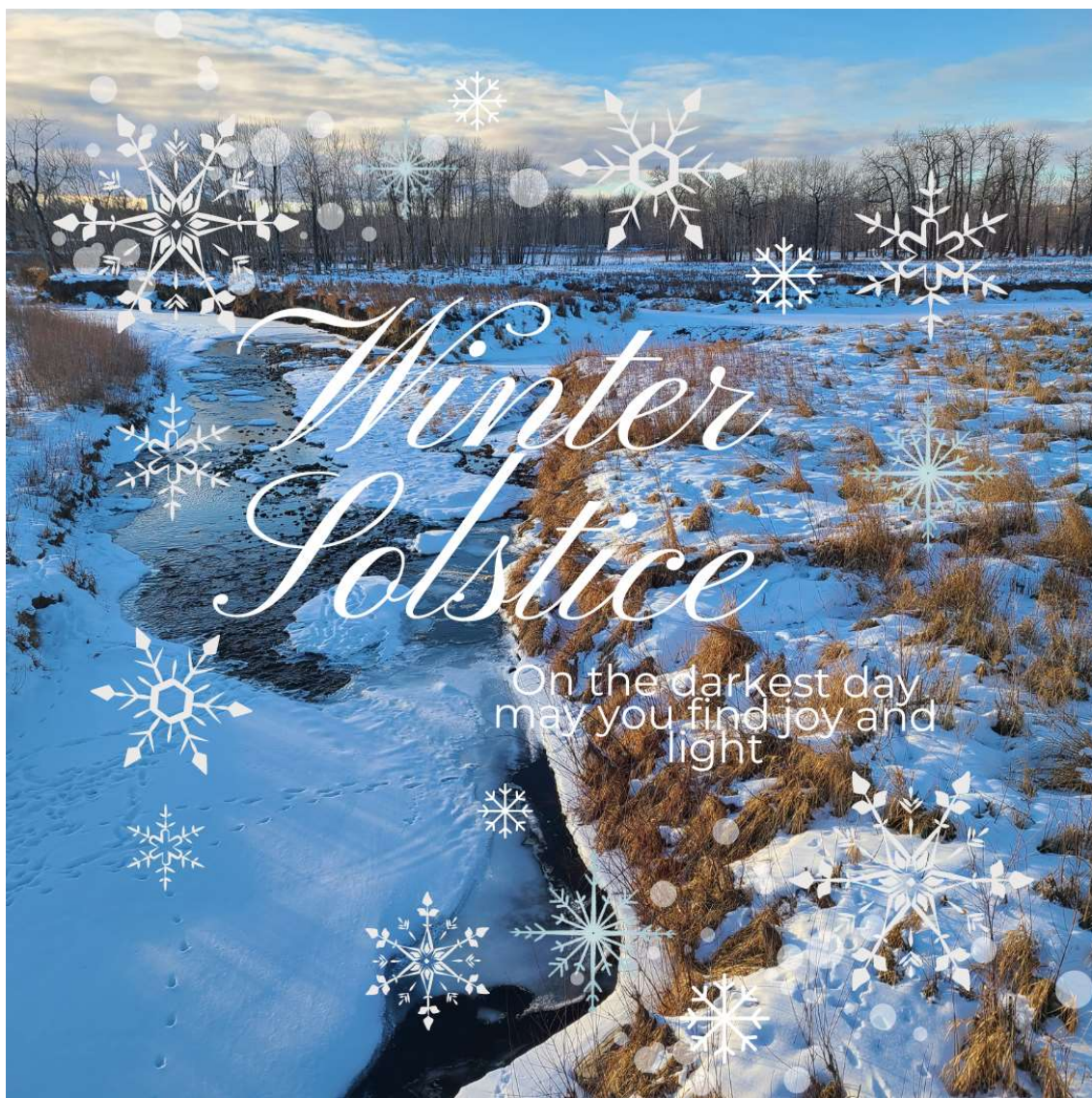




Alberta Wilderness Association

May Your Holidays Be Merry and Bright



We hope you are staying warm today, the shortest day of the year. As the staff prepare for a few days of well-earned vacation, it is time to take a moment to reflect on all that we are grateful for this past year.

They offer us places of respite, contemplation and peace. Despite the many challenges they face, Alberta has some incredibly special and unique places. We hope you were able to spend time in some of these places this year, whether on one of our Adventures for Wilderness or on your own. The conservation staff were able to spend time in some spectacular parts of Wild Alberta in 2022.

- Carolyn Campbell and journalist Gillian Steward travelled to the [Kakwa](#) and [Little Smoky](#), both important Areas of Concern for AWA. They connected with members of the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation, and local trappers, to hear their stories and concerns for the future of these areas and the caribou herds, which are at serious risk of extirpation. You can read the first of Gillian's articles [here](#).
- Phillip Meintzer visited [Bistcho](#), working as an ally to the Dene Tha' First Nation, who are taking it upon themselves to protect the wilderness in their territories. You can read more about what was an incredibly impactful trip for Phillip personally [here](#).
- Ruiping Luo toured the Suffield National Wildlife Area this summer. This was the result of AWA's letter early in 2022 to Federal Ministers. With the possible withdrawal of British troops from the area AWA hopes conservation in the NWA can be enhanced. Read more [here](#).

The AWA staff couldn't accomplish these things without the support of our members and donors. Which is the other thing we are grateful for: YOU. Your gifts of time, money or support through writing letters and phone calls is what makes our organization strong. The longevity of AWA speaks to the strength and determination of our members and supporters. Seventy percent of AWA's revenues in 2021-2022 came from general donations from you and others like you. We are all so grateful that so many Albertans are committed to supporting our organization and the work we do to continue to defend Wild Alberta.

Wishing everyone the very best for the holidays and 2023. May you be surrounded by loved ones and be joyous.

AWA Annual Lecture and Awards

time friend of AWA, Dr. Richard Thomas. Richard has never been a person to hold back when something needs to be said, and it was good to see that he has not changed. He jumped straight into his presentation with some scene-setting realities, including that:

- Our species is wholly dependent on the ecosystem services provided by a fully functioning biosphere; and
- Humanity is facing a self-induced existential crisis whose key components are climate change, biodiversity loss, overpopulation, and pollution.

'We have had a collective failure to face up to unpleasant realities,' he said, a theme that he returned to throughout his lecture..."

[Read the rest of Nigel Douglas' article in the most recent issue of the Wildlands Advocate.](#)

The evening was also a great chance to reconnect with friends and AWA supporters, and be inspired by our award winners. In addition to Richard Thomas, [Mary Kettenbach](#) (below) was presented with AWA's Wilderness Defender award, and [Tako Koning](#) with the Great Grey Owl Award for his outstanding volunteerism for AWA.



Current Issues

Action Alert: Caribou

Journalist Gillian Steward's [second article on woodland caribou](#) and communities in west central Alberta was just published in December's Wild Lands Advocate. This holiday season, let decision makers know that these lands and caribou matter to you.

If you can, please write Alberta's Minister of Environment and Protected Areas Sonya Savage (AEP.Minister@gov.ab.ca), copying AWA (ccampbell@abwild.ca), and let her know that:

- recovery of Alberta's woodland caribou is important to you;
- because of continuing industrial impacts in their home ranges, almost none of Alberta's caribou populations are self-sustaining, and time is running out;
- Alberta needs to complete land-use plans and take strong actions to reduce industrial impacts in caribou ranges to support wild caribou, Indigenous rights, and an environmentally responsible economy.

Thanks for speaking up for Alberta's caribou!



Alberta Budget Survey

The Alberta Government is soliciting public opinion on the priorities for the 2023 budget until January 15. While there are few mentions of the environment or climate change in the survey, there are a few places you can click "Other" and write these in as a priority. There is also a question at the very end where you

[Click here to take the survey.](#)

Forest Stewardship Council General Assembly

From October 9-14, 2022, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) members gathered in Bali, Indonesia for the 9th FSC General Assembly that was delayed by two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Cliff Wallis, AWA board member, currently chairs FSC Canada and attended the General Assembly, ensuring that critical motions passed to provide paths forward on thorny issues like conversion and intact forest landscapes.

This year, members considered motions covering topics such as forest conversion, including [remedies to address past deforestation](#), Intact Forest Landscapes, and ecosystem services. Indigenous issues were prominently featured. For a list of the Motions outcomes, visit <https://qa-ga.fsc.org/en/public-motions>

In addition, the forest conference covered topics including the relevance of FSC to the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#), the [Smallholder Access Program pilot results](#), [revisions to the FSC Ecosystem Services Procedure](#), and [FSC's role in addressing climate change and biodiversity loss](#).

The FSC General Assembly is a unique event in the conservation and sustainability world, bringing diverse perspectives and credibility to the FSC system. FSC's direct form of democracy can be messy but it helps in building and maintaining a strong community of people and organizations who stand behind FSC and its standards for forest conservation and management while ensuring more appropriate economic development and protection of Indigenous and worker rights.

For more information about the FSC General Assembly, visit <https://ga.fsc.org/>.



Dedicated to the conservation of wilderness and completion of a protected areas network, AWA inspires communities to care for Alberta's wild spaces through awareness and action.

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