
Introducing Amy Tucker: AWA's new Outreach & Communications Specialist

By Amy Tucker



There's a short, gravel road a little ways off Highway 22 west of Calgary, not unlike the other driveways that dot the range road. But, if you head through the first gate, along the dense rows of coniferous trees, past a loop that takes you to a dog kennel, you'll wind up in the heart of a long-standing wildlife rehabilitation and conservation facility in Alberta.

The place is a centre for wildlife rescue — it takes in orphaned or injured wildlife, with the goal of eventually releasing them. On some occasions, the animals have to stay because their afflictions are too

extensive to survive in the wild. Other times, the organisation is too late to save an animal, like one that may have strayed into traffic. And sometimes, the organisation is barred from taking the animal in, due to government policies. The researchers there, among other things, also work to reintroduce extirpated flora and fauna.

When I got out of the car the first time I showed up there a few years ago as an early-career journalist, the initial sight of the organisation's approximately 160 acres of mixed habitat took my breath away.

I was immediately welcomed in by a friendly albeit shaggy-coated dog that came bounding toward me, then stopped a bit short, wagging its tail and barking. That was the cue for the president of the organisation, who came out of an old but charming building beyond a gate, to come meet me.

She led me into the main part of the facility, where she explained that somewhere in those various enclosures were recovering wildlife — ungulates, foxes and more. Beyond an old stone wall was a small bison herd. I was still in awe in each of my following visits.

Though I had known for a long time that I wanted to be involved in some way with environmental work, it was during that first visit that I knew I had to get involved in conservation.

Fast forward about five years, and I've

now found myself doing just that: working for a different conservation group based in Calgary — the Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA). As their new Outreach and Communications Specialist, I'll hopefully help to bolster AWA's conservation efforts by making the organisation's presence better known in the community and online.

Before I came to AWA, I was working for CBC North, covering all three territories. The North is home to some of the most vast and wild spaces in the country, and from my experience working for the North's team, I learned it's also home to people who live on, thrive off of, and cherish the land in equal measure. It's a trait that has left a mark on me and a lesson I will carry forward.

My desire to help protect the environment came long before my journalism career. I was born and raised in Calgary, and I developed a love for Alberta's Rockies from an early age. As an adult I'm constantly outdoors trying new activities, from skiing, hiking, kayaking and more recently, bee keeping.

I have a passion for writing and photography, and these are among the skills I hope to contribute towards AWA's effort to protect the environment. I hope to help strengthen the community's awareness of the environmental issues faced by the province and help shine a light on the great work being done by our staff at AWA.