



Alberta Wilderness Association

Welcoming Amy Tucker to the AWA team!

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Hey there! I'm the new Outreach and Communications Specialist for the Alberta Wilderness Association. That means I'll be working to bolster AWA's presence in the community, both online and in person.

three territories. The North is home to some of the most vast and wild spaces in the country, and it's home to people who live on, thrive off of, and cherish the land in equal measure. It's a trait I have learned from and will carry with me. My desire to help protect the environment came long before my journalism career, however. I developed a love for Alberta's Rockies from an early age, and as an adult I'm constantly outdoors trying new activities, from skiing, hiking, kayaking, and more recently, beekeeping.

I have a passion for writing and photography, and these are among the skills I hope to contribute to AWA's effort to protect the environment. I believe Albertans care for their natural spaces, it's just a matter of being aware of what might be threatening them — and what's at stake if nothing is done to mitigate those threats.

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. I look forward to meeting you at future events, or here at our historic building in Kensington. Feel free to pop by on weekdays, I'll be glad to chat with you!

-Amy Tucker

Current Issues



AWA 2023 Priorities for the Boreal - Phillip Meintzer

Public Awareness Campaign for the McClelland Lake Wetland Complex

AWA is currently finishing our report based on the findings of Dr. Harris' and Dr. Biagi's review of Suncor's Operational Plan. This report will guide the development of an AWA public awareness campaign about the importance of the McClelland area and the risks associated with the expansion of Suncor's Fort Hills oil sands project. The [McClelland Lake Wetland Complex](#) lies 90km north of Fort McMurray and encompasses several environmentally significant features including McClelland Lake, a large, patterned fen, and sinkhole lakes. The area provides an important stopover point and breeding ground for migratory bird species from across North America. Suncor is planning to mine in half of the wetland complex starting in 2025 and we are concerned that this will have impacts on the unmined area.

Moon Creek Critical Habitat Assessment

Matt Coombs is currently finishing his review of West Fraser's Forest Harvest Plan (FHP) for Moon Creek in West-Central Alberta. A FHP is a map and report describing a harvest plan for a given area. Once Matt has completed this assessment, AWA will present any concerns to West Fraser, Alberta Environment and Protected Areas, and/or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. We will also question them regarding how they intend to protect

Climate Change

In collaboration with Deborah and Amy, I am working to develop AWA's position statement on climate change. We will create a new [AWA webpage](#) that summarizes our work as it relates to climate change. We want to create a portal to help people understand the issue of climate change more broadly and how climate change specifically impacts us here in Alberta.

Ronald Lake Bison Herd Cooperative Management Board (RLBH CMB)

AWA will continue to participate on the [RLBH CMB](#), and the Management Plan working group. The Board is in the process of developing a management plan to protect the Ronald Lake herd, and this process will continue over the coming year(s). AWA is the sole environmental member on the cooperative management board. We will support our Indigenous colleagues and advocate for the strongest protections possible for the Ronald Lake bison and their habitat.

Wildlands Advocate

As the current editor, this year will see the continued production of a high-quality, factually accurate [Wildlands Advocate](#) magazine that covers important wilderness/wildlife conservation issues in Alberta. I will support Amy Tucker, our new Outreach and Communications Specialist, as she slowly takes over the role of editor during 2023.

Oil Sands

AWA will continue to advocate for the timely release of the State of the Environment Report(s) so that the public and decision makers have the relevant information they need to understand the cumulative impacts of oil sands development on the region.

Dene Tha' First Nation

We will continue to offer our support and allyship to the Dene Tha' First Nation and their goal of protecting their Traditional Territory around [Bistcho Lake](#) through [Indigenous-led conservation](#).



AWA 2023 Priorities for Caribou and Energy Reclamation - Carolyn Campbell

Caribou

To recover Alberta's amazing and threatened, [woodland caribou](#) to naturally self-sustaining populations, our provincial government has promised to finish important sub-regional land-use plans that will reduce cumulative industrial disturbances in caribou home ranges. AWA was a member of three task forces formed in 2019 and three more formed in 2022 to develop recommendations for these plans. To date, only two plans, for [Cold Lake](#) and [Bistcho](#) caribou, have been finished. In 2023, we seek the prompt completion of land-use plans that were due in 2022, for the Narraway and Redrock-Prairie Creek mountain caribou south of Grande Prairie, and for the boreal caribou on the East side of Athabasca River. We also seek the completion of the northwest [Chinchaga](#) and west central's Little Smoky-A La Peche range plans that have been promised for 2023.

Read the [Cold Lake](#) and [Bistcho Lake](#) Subregional plans.

Mine Financial Security Program

In 2023 AWA will continue to [seek major reforms](#) to this program now under

billion dollars of costs for clean-up of mines that the operators are supposed to pay for. We believe MFSP needs to shift to require oil sands and coal mine operators to post full financial security with government, equal to the transparent, credible costs of the reclamation liabilities from the operators' actual disturbance footprint.

Foothills Solar Project Hearings

From January 9 to 20, the AUC held hearings for the Foothills Solar Project, a 150 MW project proposed to cover 1,600 acres to the northeast of Frank Lake. Parts of the project lie within the Frank Lake Important Bird Area (IBA). AWA Conservation Specialist Ruiping Luo submitted AWA's concerns about the impact of the solar project on the bird populations at Frank Lake. The AUC is expected to make its decision on the project by April 19.

[Read more](#) on Frank Lake and this project.

Listen to the [recording of the hearings](#).

-Ruiping Luo

Greenwashing Alberta's Forest Industry

Canada's [Competition Bureau recently decided to launch an inquiry](#) into claims made by Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). The launching of an investigation follows a [complaint made by EcoJustice](#) to the Competition Bureau against SFI in November 2022, on behalf of AWA and several other conservation organizations. The complaint states that SFI is making false and misleading claims about the sustainability of its forest certification standard. The recently launched investigation is an important step towards calling out greenwashing and better protecting our forests.

-Devon Earl

Action Alert

Riplinger Wind Power Project

TransAlta is proposing to develop the [Riplinger Wind Power Project](#), composed of 67 wind turbines generating up to 300 MW, in Cardston county near Hill Spring. The project is raising concerns for its proximity to several waterbodies and the bird populations in the area, as well as the placement near or in mapped native prairie. TransAlta has stated they have completed the environmental studies, although the results of the studies have not been shared on their webpage. The project is currently undergoing stakeholder engagement. We encourage our supporters to attend the open house to voice their concerns and ask to see the results of TransAlta's studies.



transalta
Riplinger
Engagement Session

Please join us for a community engagement session.

TransAlta representatives will be available to discuss plans for the proposed Riplinger Wind Power Project located approximately 30 km southeast of Pincher Creek in Cardston County.



Friday, February 17, 2023

Doors are open from 3:00 to 8:00pm



Hill Spring Community Hall

11 E 2 Ave S, Hill Spring, Alberta, T0K 1E0



Light refreshments will be served

For more information about TransAlta or the Riplinger Wind Power Project, please contact us:

- **Toll-free call:** 1-877-547-3365 Extension 1
- **Email:** Canadian_projects@transalta.com
- **Website:** www.transalta.com

Upcoming Events

[Ski Adventure](#)

February 11, 2023

with Jamie Jack

Strap on your skis and join Jaimie to help raise \$2,000 for wilderness with an epic outing along the Spray River to the Goat Creek bridge. We'll conquer the 19 km out-and-back trail from the Spray West Trail parking lot and pop out at the Waldhaus in Banff for celebratory snacks and a warm drink.

[I want to ski with Jamie!](#)

[I want to sponsor Jamie!](#)



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ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION WAS ESTABLISHED AS A NON-PROFIT CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION IN 1965 WITH A MISSION TO DEFEND WILD ALBERTA THROUGH AWARENESS AND ACTION. WE SEEK THE COMPLETION OF A PROTECTED AREAS NETWORK AND GOOD STEWARDSHIP OF ALBERTA'S PUBLIC LANDS, WATERS, AND BIODIVERSITY TO ENSURE FUTURE GENERATIONS ENJOY THE ABUNDANT BENEFITS THEY PROVIDE.

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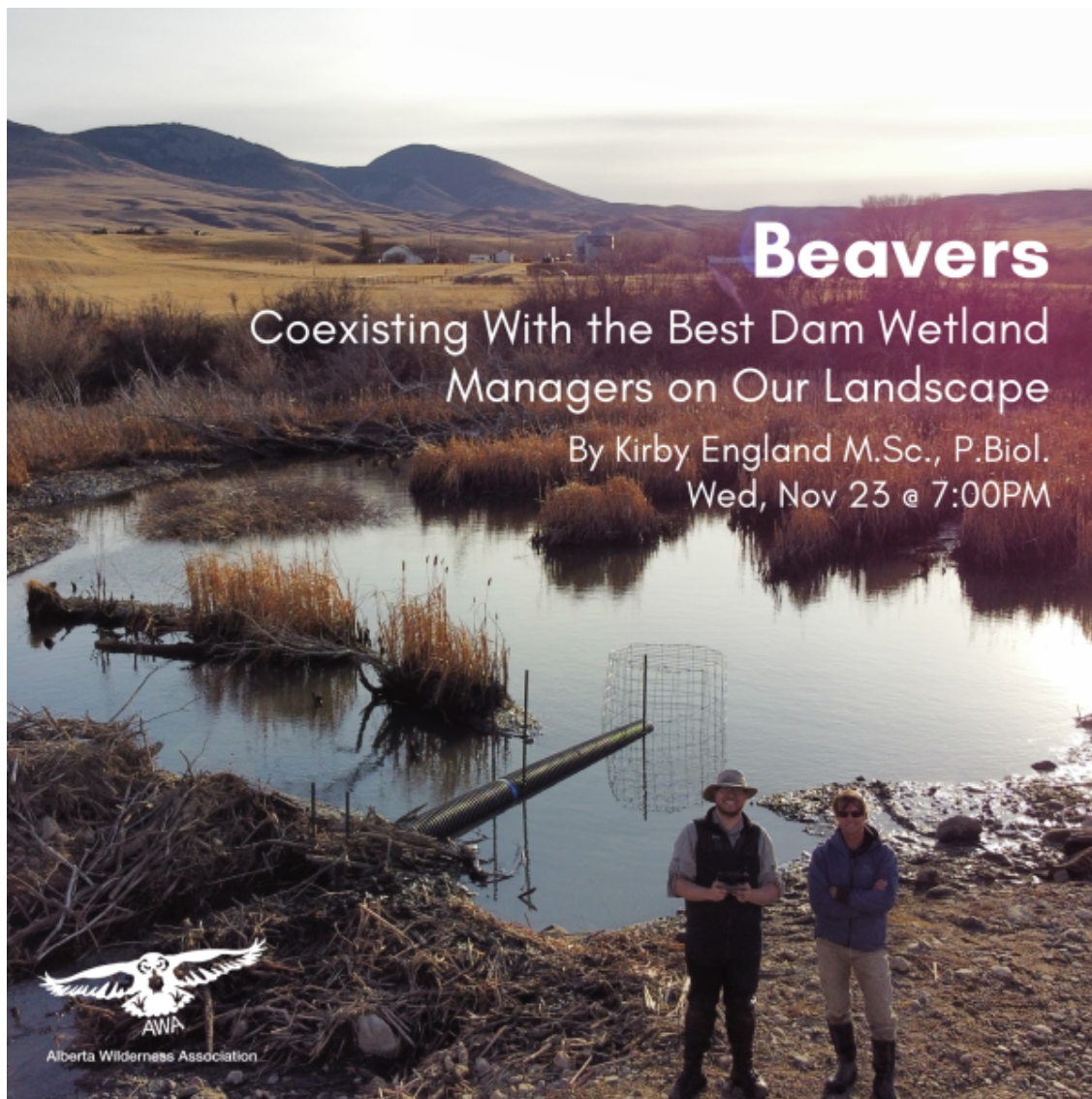


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Enjoy a cold beer and support the Alberta Wilderness Association. Visit any [CRAFT Beer Market](#) location in Alberta to enjoy a refreshing pint of Stay Wild Mango Hibiscus Wheat Ale. \$1 from every purchase will be donated to the AWA.

In Case You Missed It



AWA was pleased to host a talk with Kirby England, which is now available to view on [YouTube](#).

In his talk, Kirby gave an overview of beaver ecology, as well as our interactions past, present, and future with this original wetland creator and ecosystem engineer. Despite all the benefits that beavers provide the

to benefit from beavers with overall lower costs — both environmental and economical. Finally, Kirby shared lessons learned through twenty-plus years of personal and professional experience in beaver wetlands, along with beaver stories in the best dam presentation on beavers and beaver habitat in Alberta.

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.

[Donate](#)

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