



2018 AGM Summary

On March 7 the Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Association (AGLA) held their Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Brooks. The AGM serves as an important opportunity to inform our members about the activities of the AGLA on the various provincial policy issues impacting leaseholders across the province and to hear the concerns from members about how to best manage their grazing leases.

AGLA Activity Update

The meeting opened with an update from AGLA Chairman Pat Rutledge on the group's activities over the past year. AGLA has been tirelessly working on promoting our industry and the role of the leaseholder in the responsible stewardship of grazing lease lands for public, ecological and economic benefits.

AGLA has been an active participant in the Grazing Disposition Holders Operational Committee (GDHOC). The committee acts as a very important line of communication with government to deal with operational and policy issues in the grazing lease system. The membership of the committee includes AGLA, Alberta Beef Producers, Western Stock Growers Association, Northern Alberta Grazing Association, Central Alberta Grazing Association, Sustainable Canada, Special Areas, Rocky Mountain Forest Grazing Reserve Association and a number of government representatives.

This year the work of the GDHOC has been focussed on finishing the grazing lease rental rate modernization. The final proposal represents so much work and dedication of all the member organizations. We have been rolling out the proposal to our members and answering questions and concerns that have come forward. Next steps is to get this proposal through the legislative process and move on to implementation.

For more information, the final rental rate framework proposal and the lease cost survey can be found on the AGLA website.

High on the list of topics to tackle in upcoming committee meetings include recreational access issues, extended tenure based on a risk approach (tenure for stewardship), succession planning and management challenges, and administration and management of heritage rangelands.

AGLA continues to support its leaseholder members by advocating on a number of issues; the suite of concerns regarding recreational access, the lag time for lease transfer and assignment paperwork to make its way through the department, the recognition of the property rights that are associated with a lease contract and the recognition of the work of the leaseholder through tenure for stewardship.

James Hargrave Legacy Fund

James Hargrave Legacy Fund board members Bill Newton and Aaron Brower updated the membership on the establishment of the James Hargrave Legacy Fund.

As chairman on the AGLA, James Hargrave was a superhero advocating on the role of the leaseholder on the continued health and stewardship of the grassland ecosystem. He tirelessly worked on building relationships and driving initiatives with elected officials, bureaucrats, academics and other stakeholders to propel the mandate of the AGLA. We lost James tragically this past fall in one of the wildfires that devastated much of Alberta's countryside. While we could never do enough to fill the gap that James left behind, the objective of the James Hargrave Legacy Fund is to keep a little bit of James in the beef industry.

The vision is that the James Hargrave Legacy Fund will encourage and enable individuals in the beef industry to carry on the values, leadership and philosophy that James embodied. The fund seeks to support and promote fields of interest for which James had a passion: intergenerational knowledge transfer and succession, grasslands stewardship and management and public recognition of the same, water conservation, and work done to progress a marketplace for ecosystem services – as well as policy development on any of these topics.

More information on the fund and how to donate can be found on the James Hargrave Legacy Fund website at jameshargravelegacy.com.

ACTION Surface Rights

We had an enlightening presentation from Daryl Bennett of Action Surface Rights Association on industrial installations and what landowners and leaseholders should be informed about. The state of affairs with the Alberta Energy Regulator, the Orphaned Wells Association, the Alberta Surface Rights Board and Alberta Environment and Parks has raised some red flags for landowners and leaseholders with oil and gas and also wind and solar installations on their land. With the Redwater Decision also in the mix, the need to be informed is at an all-time high.

For more information, the presentation can be found on our website.

Recreational Access Discussion

With a presentation on recreational access by leaseholder Bill Newton, the AGLA has opened this up for discussion among leaseholders, with government representatives and elected officials. The problem is becoming harder to ignore and times have changed since the Agricultural Dispositions Statutes Amendment Act in 2003 and the Recreational Access Regulations in 2006. The amount of recreational pressure on Crown lands has grown to unprecedented levels and it's starting to become unmanageable for some leaseholders. AGLA will be following up on this in search of workable solutions with government.

For more information, the presentation can be found on our website.

Elections

The AGM is also the forum where the board of directors are elected by the membership. This year's election resulted in welcoming new directors to the board. Perry Shwetz was elected for Zone C, Lee Fryberger and Regan Curry were both elected for Zone E. Kyle Forbes, Pat Rutledge, Dan Gray and Kevin Meneice were all re-elected onto the board.

In the board meeting following the AGM, Kyle Forbes was elected as chairman, Dan Gray was elected as vice chairman and Darcy Wills was re-elected as secretary / treasurer.

The board is comprised of a very capable group of individuals who as a group are tremendous advocates and representatives for the grazing leaseholders in Alberta. They are committed to the continual effort it takes to maintain and improve the grazing lease system.

Resolutions

The AGM is the opportunity for any members to bring forward and/or discuss any resolutions they see fit for the association. This year we had two resolutions tabled for the membership to discuss.

The first new resolution addressed the need for the industry to have the grazing lease modernization proposal implemented. There is an increasing need for the grazing industry to have an updated and defensible rental rate and assignment fee structure put in place. It was resolved the AGLA lobby Alberta Environment and Parks to implement the proposal as developed with all industry stakeholders and government.

The second new resolution addresses concerns with the increasing problem of brush and woody species encroachment on grasslands due to the inability to use all of the tools necessary to control encroachment. It was resolved and passed by membership that the AGLA work with stakeholders to help leaseholders find a solution to this issue.

If you have any questions about this year's AGM or you would like more information on the issues that were discussed at the meeting, please feel free to contact any of the board members listed below:

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