



2019 AGM Summary

On February 8 the Alberta Grazing Leaseholders Association (AGLA) held their Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Red Deer. The AGM serves as an important opportunity to inform our members about the activities of the AGLA on the various 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 Kyle Forbes 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 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.

Rental Rate and Assignment Fee Modernization

In June 2014 the Department approached the industry to strike a committee to modernize the rental rate and assignment fee structure for grazing leases in Alberta. The final proposal, which was put forward to government to navigate through the legislative process this year, represents so much work and dedication of all the industry organizations. We have been rolling out the proposal to our members and answering questions and concerns that have come forward.

The new proposed calculation factors in the costs a leaseholder incurs to run a lease which was not in the previous formula nor factored into the frozen rate from the past 20-some years. The lease costs were determined by a province-wide lease cost survey conducted by MNP. When running a comparison of proposed and frozen rental rates, excepting the impact of high prices in the 2015, the proposed rental rate is lower than the current frozen rate the majority of the time over the past 20 years. Assignment fees would be a set cost that reflects the administration costs of transferring the lease contract. The new proposal, over the long term, will represent no net revenue increase with government nor no net loss for leaseholders – this was an objective from the start.

Our website has copies of the proposal summary and FAQs for those who would like more information.

Land Use Designations and Bighorn Country Proposal

Changing land use designations on public lands is a conversation AGLA has been actively participating in since the land use framework has been conceptualized. We have been vocal this year in heritage rangelands designations and more recently the Bighorn Country Proposal. As leaseholders we want to

be proactive to prevent situations whereby prescriptive grazing recommendations are handed down from the province to leaseholders /permit holders as they tend to create management issues for leaseholders and health issues for the landscape.

We have attended consultation meetings and a roundtable meeting with the Deputy Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks with many Assistant Deputy Ministers to discuss and clarify the impact to the leaseholders in the Bighorn Country Proposal area. There are concerns by leaseholders in the uncertainty of the security of the grazing lease going forward. The government assures us that the intention is to keep the grazing leases business as usual with no changes to their relationship with the department. What keeps tripping us up is that lack of trust we have in the government and department. There are real succession concerns with this proposal that lacks details.

AGLA has urged the government to pause on the development of the proposal until the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan is developed and approved as the proposal will have to be part of the plan as well. There is no good reason to operate outside of the land use framework to develop a plan for this.

Our submission to the government on the Bighorn Country Proposal can be found on our website.

Grazing Disposition Holders Operational Committee

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.

Over the past year, the GDHOC has been working on the Operational Standards for Alberta's Public Land Grazing Dispositions document and has also started the development of a tenure for stewardship initiative and working on recreational access and other grazing lease management issues, which will continue to be an area of focus in the upcoming months. High on the list of topics to tackle in upcoming committee meetings include succession planning and management challenges, and administration and management of heritage rangelands.

Recreational Access

Recreational access has continued to be a point of potential conflict between leaseholders and recreational users. There is a great deal of misinformation out there in regards to what the leaseholder rights are when granting reasonable recreational access. The government definitely hears from the disgruntled recreationalist, but they don't necessarily hear from the disgruntled leaseholder when there are issues. When recreationalists are acting in contravention to the regulation, there are fines involved. It's as simple as calling the Report-A-Poacher line. Even if the officer doesn't end up catching the perpetrator, data can be collected that more accurately reflects the scope of the problems for the leaseholder.

Online Stock Return Form

The grazing lease stock return form is slated to go paperless by 2020 in a phase-in effort over the next two years. Leaseholders will have to establish a profile on the system and submit online. Leaseholders

who do not have internet capability have the option of using kiosks at the regional offices to submit their stock return forms. This has the potential to be a real problem for leaseholders who are not computer literate or hooked up to the internet. AGLA has urged the government to at the very least extend the phase-in and would ideally like to keep the paper versions for the leaseholders who aren't able to make the switch.

This will be an on-going discussion item with the Grazing Disposition Holders Operational Committee.

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 director Art Wheat to the board. Darcy Wills and Larry Sears were both re-elected to the board. We also welcomed Brian Loewen as director in Zone B this past November.

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

The board is comprised of very capable 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 six resolutions tabled for the membership to discuss.

RESOLUTION 2019-01

WHEREAS clearing for perimeter fences has been reduced to 50 feet from the previously allowed 100 feet and cross fence allowance has been reduced to 30 feet from the previous 70 feet and WHEREAS this reduction does not take into account the tree length falling across the fence nor the ability to clear and maintain the fence lines.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the AGLA lobby the government to return to the previous policy to 100 feet for perimeter fencing and 70 feet for cross fencing.

RESOLUTION 2019 – 02

WHEREAS grazing leases require extensive management and time investment throughout the year and

WHEREAS travel to and from grazing leases can be a limiting factor to proper management and stewardship

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the AGLA request parity for leaseholders and trappers in regards to use and placement of cabins and similar buildings to facilitate proper management and stewardship.

RESOLUTION 2019 - 03

WHEREAS the purchasing of grazing leases requires the approval of financing or the placement of funds in a trust previous to and in order for the legal aspect of the purchase to proceed and

WHEREAS the length of time to process transfers and assignments through the Department represents a significant barrier to commerce in that financing may expire and money placed in trust costs a loss of interest for the purchaser and loss of investment opportunity for the seller

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the AGLA lobby the government to reduce the time for transfers and assignments to be processed.

RESOLUTION 2019 - 04

WHEREAS grazing leases, grazing permits and grazing licenses are all clearly defined in Alberta legislation as agricultural dispositions and as such, the land assigned under these dispositions should be managed as agricultural land

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the AGLA lobby the government to transfer the administration of agricultural dispositions from the Ministry of Environment and Parks to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

RESOLUTION 2019 – 05

WHEREAS the current AGLA policy for sharing membership information is ‘no sharing with anyone at anytime for any reason’ and

WHEREAS AGLA regional meeting processes is hindered by directors and executive not having access to leaseholder contact information to promote AGLA to local leaseholders and

WHEREAS access to leaseholder contact information can allow directors and executive to be more effective within their zones

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that directors and executive be allowed to access membership contact information solely for business pertaining to AGLA

RESOLUTION 2019 – 06

WHEREAS the processing for grazing disposition renewals is long and creates uncertainty for managers

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AGLA lobby the government to take the necessary steps to implement a more timely renewal process of grazing dispositions and that delayed renewal tenure starts from the date the renewal is signed.

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:

Name	Title	Zone	Phone	Email
Kyle Forbes	Chairman	A1	403-548-3183	k_forbes_@hotmail.com
Dan Gray	Vice Chairman	At large	403-633-1925	bdlgray@hotmail.com
Darcy Wills	Secretary/Treasurer	A	403-344-4312	drwills@cciwireless.ca
Larry Sears	Past Chairman	A	403-625-0417	larrylsears@gmail.com
Brian Loewen	Director	B	780-210-2113	lfw@mcsnet.ca
Art Wheat	Director	C	780-847-2385	tbonecattleco@hotmail.com
Perry Shwetz	Director	C	780-914-4931	pa_of_6@hotmail.com
Kevin Meneice	Director	D	780-523-1252	kevinmeneice@gmail.com
Lee Fryberger	Director	E	403-793-1742	Lee.fryberger@xplornet.com
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