

Honourable Todd Loewen
Minister of Forestry and Parks,
323 Legislature Building,
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Loewen,

RE: 2025 SAPAA Site Inspection Report and 2026 Request for Assistance

SAPAA has prepared a summary of the findings from conducting site inspections within the sites covered by the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas and Heritage Rangelands (WAERNAHR) Act. On the one hand, I am pleased to report that the majority of the sites visited were given a Naturalness score of Good to Great. On the other hand a few are suffering from egregious abuse, and all are under pressure from multiple users.

This report is a continuation of the former Alberta Government Volunteer Stewardship Program. SAPAA took up the challenge of operating this program noting the following unknowns:

1. Is it possible to comply with volunteer occupational health and safety requirements while conducting inspections?
2. What role can technology play in the above challenges?
3. How to attract, train, retain, and motivate a volunteer cadre?

In 2025, SAPAA developed an online safety program but has yet to deploy it due to the costs involved. In 2026, SAPAA launched an online site inspection application improving information management. Concurrently, SAPAA adopted iNaturalist.ca as its biophysical inventory tool.

To help with the last unknown, SAPAA is requesting from the Ministry the following:

1. Official recognition of the role SAPAA plays in monitoring these sites, and,
2. Letters of support if SAPAA applies for grants and other funding to carry out its work.

SAPAA is happy to work with Ministry officials on the form and substance of these two things.

Thank you Minister Loewen for your consideration of the above. Please pass on our appreciation for the support your staff have provided to our organization. We look forward to working with you in 2026.



Frank Potter, FCPA, MBA

Stewards of Alberta's Protected Areas Association (SAPAA)
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