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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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ACA Grants in Biodiversity announces award recipients from the 2019 competition

Edmonton – March 18, 2019– Exterior threats and invasions are a common theme among the projects that received Alberta Conservation Association funding this year through its ACA Grants in Biodiversity program. Whether the threat is sulfur emissions or an invasion of earthworms, there is an impact on the flora and fauna of Alberta; the research funded this year will shed light on these impacts and provide valuable information to decision makers. The Alberta Conservation Association is proud to announce that 24 student projects will share \$206,810 of funding this year. This year’s grants ranged from \$1,595 to \$15,900 and were distributed to 6 PhD and 18 Masters candidates. A number of this competition’s awards went to institutions outside of Alberta including the University of California Riverside, Western University, Université de Sherbrooke, University of Saskatchewan and the University of Winnipeg. Alberta’s largest research institutions: University of Alberta, University of Calgary and the University of Lethbridge, picked up the majority of grants.

The ACA Grants in Biodiversity program is funded by the Alberta Conservation Association and Syncrude. With this year’s awards, the 25 year old ACA Grants in Biodiversity has now awarded \$5.4 million dollars to 529 researchers. The research supported by the ACA Grants in Biodiversity ultimately aims to conserve, protect and enhance Alberta's fish, wildlife and natural habitats as well as develop biodiversity professionals for the future.

ACA Grants in Biodiversity Recipients

Recipient (Program)	Institution	Supervisor	Project Title
Emily Barrie (MSc)	University of Alberta	Suzanne Tank	Assessing the effects of nutrient loading on stream function across agricultural gradients in three ecoregions of Alberta
Brendan Casey (MSc)	University of Alberta	Erin Bayne	Quantifying the effects of variable retention on Alberta boreal bird communities
Andrew Chaulk (PhD)	University of Western Ontario	Nusha Keyghobadi	The effect of habitat connectivity on genetic rescue potential in the alpine butterfly <i>Parnassius smintheus</i> Doubleday (Lepidoptera: Papilionidae)
Andrew Cook (PhD)	University of Alberta	Heather Proctor	How many mites can dance on a pin-feather? Correlating feather microstructure with orientation of vane-dwelling feather mites and body size of mites and their host birds
Maria Dobbin (MSc)	University of Alberta	Evie Merrill	Analysis of mule deer (<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>) contacts and transmission of chronic wasting

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Devon Earl (MSc)	University of Calgary	Mary Reid and Anne-Lise Norman	The consequences of sulfur emissions in southern Alberta on conifer growth
James Franklin (PhD)	University of Alberta	Justine Karst	Do mycorrhizas mediate plant growth on natural bituminous soils?
Sydney Huculak (MSc)	University of Alberta	Suzanne Tank and Rolf Vinebrooke	Drivers of eutrophication of Alberta's agricultural stream ecosystems: Is it nitrogen, phosphorous, or both?
Benjamin Larue (PhD)	Universite de Sherbrooke	Marco Festa-Bianchet	Influence of resource allocation trade-offs on bighorn sheep (<i>Ovis canadensis</i>) morphological, behavioral and life-history traits
Justine Lejoly (PhD)	University of Alberta	Sylvie Quideau	Earthworm invasion in the boreal forest: Implications for microbial communities and carbon storage
Erin Low (MSc)	University of Calgary	Robert Barclay	Effects of forest fire on bat communities in southwestern Alberta
Maggie MacDonald (MSc)	University of Alberta	Maya Evenden	The diversity and abundance of predatory ground beetles (Coleoptera: Carabidae) associated with populations of the invasive Pea Leaf Weevil, <i>Sitona lineatus</i> L. (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) in Canadian prairie fabaceae crops
Alexa MacPherson (MSc)	University of Alberta	Andrew Derocher	Habitat fragmentation and movement ecology of cougars in north central Alberta
Sejer Meyhoff (MSc)	University of Lethbridge	Dan Johnson	Validation of stable isotope analysis for determining dietary proportions and trophic dynamics in plains sharp-tailed grouse (<i>Tympanuchus phasianellus jamesi</i>)
Ronald Miksha (MSc)	University of Calgary	Lawrence Harder	Impact of urban honey bees on the success of native bees
Daniel Pierce (PhD)	University of California, Riverside	Alan Brelsford	Investigating stability of an avian hybrid zone
Flavio Preti (MSc)	University of Alberta	Maya Evenden	Effect of microsporidian infection on pheromone-based communication of the forest tent caterpillar, an important disturbance agent of aspen in Alberta
Cora Romanow (MSc)	University of Winnipeg	Susan Lingle	Female mating tactics of white-tailed deer and mule deer
Rebecca Smith (MSc)	University of Saskatchewan	Jeffrey Lane	Mechanisms of climate-mediated effects on intraspecific torpor profiles in Columbian ground squirrels (<i>Urocitellus columbianus</i>)
Kaitlyn Trepanier (MSc)	University of Alberta	Brad Pinno	Vegetation community dynamics on soil islands in oil sands reclamation
Madeline Trottier (MSc)	University of Alberta	Evie Merrill	Winter behaviour in a new migratory segment: Ya Ha Tinda elk herd
Morganne Wall (MSc)	University of Alberta	Erin Bayne and Troy Wellicome	Survival of endangered burrowing owls (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>): New estimates to account for annual dispersal

Sydney Worthy (MSc)	University of Alberta	Carol Frost	Effects of a mass-flowering crop (canola) on native plant-pollinator network interactions and plant reproductive success
Lauren Zink (MSc)	University of Lethbridge	Greg Pyle	The effects of chronic exposure to cadmium and microplastics on serotonin levels and feeding behaviour in the leech, <i>Nepheleopsis obscura</i>