

Members seeking appointment to the CPAWS SAB board for 2025-2026

(in alphabetical order by last name)

Nigel Bankes (seeking re-appointment)

Nigel Bankes is an emeritus professor of law, having retired from the University of Calgary in 2021. Nigel spent much of his career working in the areas of energy and natural resources law, as well as international environmental law. He posts regularly on these issues on the University of Calgary's Faculty of Law blog. Nigel enjoys spending time in the mountains, cross country skiing, hiking and backpacking, and is passionate about maintaining the natural spaces of southern Alberta for the benefit of future generations. He is proud to have raised, with his wife Jane, two young adults with a love of the outdoors.

Sarita Barrett (seeking appointment)

Sarita is a Management Consultant with over 25 years of business and consulting experience. She specializes in strategy development, risk management, audits and assessments of major programs for business units within large organizations. She has managed and led teams for large, major transformational programs for organizations including merger and acquisitions, disaster recovery and incident response planning, cyber security strategy, regulatory, governance and operational compliance. Sarita believes in giving back to the community and in sharing her vast experience to empower others, inspire and help pave the way for future generations. She currently sits on the Assessment Review Board (chaired multiple hearings) for Rocky View County. Her other board tenures have included Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth (CBFY), Family and Community Support Services (Chair, Vice chair), Helping Hands Society of Cochrane, as well as the Immigrant Services Committee at Rocky View County. Sarita holds a Bachelor of Science degree and has completed the Administrative Law and Assessment Training.

Nicole Edge (seeking re-appointment)

Dr. Nicole Edge brings technical skills (>25 years as a CPA-CA) and a range of experience in the nonprofit and academic sector, and has been involved in teaching, consulting, advising, and business case building. The work CPAWS is doing in our communities resonates with her values and personal actions (she and her partner are currently working toward building a regenerative market garden in Sundre) and her motivation for becoming involved is to find ways to share her skills that may be useful in supporting CPAWS initiatives and goals.

Doug Firby (seeking re-appointment)

Doug is a respected and widely published journalist with more than four decades of writing and editing experience. He has written primarily for newspapers, magazines and online publications in Canada. Since leaving The Calgary Herald, as Editorial Page Editor in 2008, he has worked as a marketing and social media consultant for Sunshine Village ski resort, the Calgary Real Estate Board and the Canada West Foundation public policy think tank. Doug stepped down from his role as Publisher of Troy Media Digital Solutions in 2023 to concentrate on his weekly Substack column and other writing ventures. He recently published a book recounting his cross-Canada trip by bicycle in 2021. He has taught journalism at the post-secondary level and acts as an advisor for journalism programs. He and his wife Lisa Monforton also run Big Tree Communications, a boutique consulting firm.

Elliot Fox (seeking re-appointment)

Elliot Fox (Makoyoohkinnii – Wolf Collar) is a member of the Kainai First Nation (Blood Tribe) – Blackfoot Confederacy in Alberta, Canada. He has over 30 years of private and public service experience in the land, environment and natural resource conservation and management arena as a front-line technician and senior manager. Elliot's extensive experience includes working with federal, provincial and First Nations governments and non-government agencies in sustainable land use, ecosystem and natural resource conservation and management and climate adaptation. In November 2024, Elliot was elected to the Blood Tribe Council and is now serving his first term in a leadership position with one of the largest First Nation communities in Canada. Elliot enjoys being in the mountains with his family, hiking, hunting, fishing, relaxing and exploring and is passionate about maintaining wild places and spaces in Blackfoot Territory and advocating for the return of plains bison and native trout and large carnivore restoration.

Don McGarvey (seeking appointment)

Don McGarvey practiced law for 37 years before retiring in May 2025. Don spent much of his career as a commercial litigator with an emphasis on class action defence, professional regulation and discipline, and commercial insurance. He has held a variety of leadership and volunteer positions over the years. He has also held board positions with various not-for-profit entities. Don's interest in the work of CPAWS derives from his lifelong passion for Alberta's fish, wildlife, and wild spaces and ensuring they are protected and preserved for future generations. Among a variety of other sporting interests, Don enjoys fly fishing in the Alberta wilderness where he feels most invigorated and energized, regardless of whether the fish are biting.

Jon Mee (seeking re-appointment)

Jon Mee is the Chair of the Department of Biology at Mount Royal University, where he has taught introductory and advanced biology courses. His expertise includes basic and applied ecology and genetics, and he has published over 30 scientific papers in these disciplines. Jon has also worked with the Committee on the Status of Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) to provide wildlife status updates and to identify wildlife species.

Lana Mezquita (seeking re-appointment)

Lana Mezquita is a finance and strategic planning professional with over 10 years of experience, primarily in the agriculture sector. Her expertise includes strategy formation, forecasting, and financial analysis. She holds a CPA designation and an MBA from Queen's University. Lana grew up biking and hiking on the protected land near her family farm in rural Manitoba. These days, you can find her taking advantage of Alberta's beautiful landscapes – skiing in the winter and hiking in the summer. Lana looks forward to taking an active role on the board, as she feels that preserving our beautiful land for future generations is of the utmost importance.

Douglas Mills (seeking appointment)

Douglas Mills has significant experience in government relations, including as the Chief of Staff to the Minister of the Environment in Alberta from 1998 to 2006, and more recently as executive director of External Relations at Alberta Innovates.

Phil Nykyforuk (seeking re-appointment)

Phil Nykyforuk is a partner in the Advocacy Department of the law firm Gowling WLG (Canada) LLP in Calgary. He has practiced law for over 35 years and has resided in Calgary since 1993. Phil was an active volunteer with CPAWS in its campaigns to protect the Whaleback and Spray Valley in Kananaskis. He regards CPAWS Southern Alberta as an important and effective voice for the many Albertans who wish to protect and preserve our wild landscapes and the species that inhabit them. Phil welcomes the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors and help ensure that his children and grandchildren have the same opportunity to experience the wonders of nature in our province. Phil enjoys hiking, cycling, jogging, bird watching and nature photography. He and his family are frequent visitors to Alberta's National and Provincial Parks.

Deanna Steblyk (seeking appointment)

Deanna Steblyk, K.C., has practiced law in Alberta since 1998 and currently works at the Alberta Securities Commission as Senior Special Counsel to the Vice-Chairs, where she assists with policy work and adjudication. Deanna has always had a strong commitment to public service and governance, and has worked in a wide variety of volunteer capacities throughout most of her life, including throughout the majority of her legal career. She considers it important to give back to the community through volunteerism, and values the opportunity to make a contribution. Animal welfare and environmental protection are at the top of her list of the non-profit endeavours she is most excited to support. Deanna has an extensive history of non-profit board and leadership experience, including service on the boards of the Law Society of Alberta, Legal Aid Alberta, the Association of Women Lawyers, and the Calgary Humane Society. At all four organizations, she served as President or Chair. In 2013, Deanna received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in recognition of her community service.

Connie Van der Byl (seeking re-appointment)

Dr. Connie Van der Byl was appointed as Associate Vice-President, Research, Scholarship and Community Engagement at Mount Royal University in January 2023. She leads the office of research, scholarship and community engagement as well as Mount Royal University Institutes under the Provost. Connie was the Academic Director of Mount Royal University's Institute for Environmental Sustainability for eight years and has been a faculty member in the Bissett School of Business since 2012 teaching courses in business strategy and sustainability. She has a PhD in Energy Management and Sustainable Development and had an early career in Alberta's energy sector. Her research interests focus on organizations and their strategic responses to environmental issues.