

Innovations in:

- Data and information sharing
- Strategic coordination of planning
- Partnership building

Beaver Hills Initiative

Municipal Wetland Conservation Policy:

Local governments in Alberta are responsible for the management of water under authority provided in the Municipal Government Act, and with respect to fact that all water in the province of Alberta is managed and protected by the Government of Alberta, including water located on private lands.

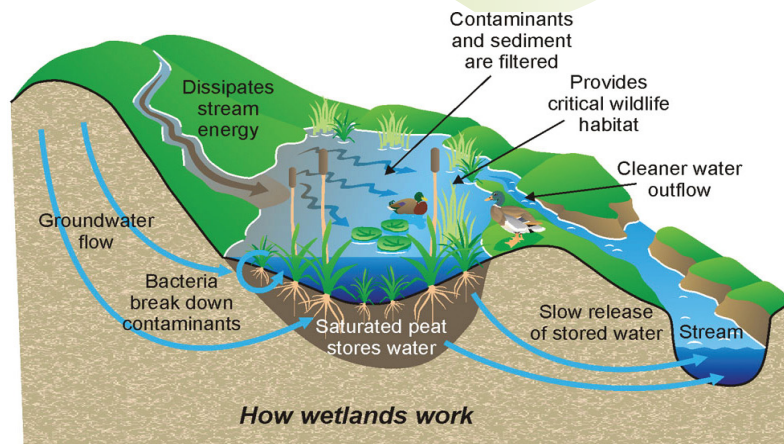
Waterbodies are defined in the Water Act as any location where water flows or is present, including locations where the flow or presences of water is intermittent, seasonal or occurs only during a flood.

Wetlands are defined as waterbodies less than 2 meters in depth and areas of land with water table at, near or above the land surface; poorly drained soils which are saturated for a long enough period to promote aquatic processes; and water loving plants and various kinds of biological activity which are adapted to a wet environment occur.

Strathcona County has developed a Wetland Conservation Guide which provides a methodology for assessing wetland conservation by explaining how proposed wetland losses will be reviewed and how wetland mitigation may occur. The intent is No Net Loss of wetlands



Seasonal Wetland



and long term increase in wetland resources. Overall, it explains the process to help reduce loss of wetland area by avoiding, minimizing and compensating. The municipal policy is intended to complement provincial efforts at wetland conservation, specifically the Water Act and Provincial Wetland Restoration/Compensation Guide. Other legislation supporting wetland conservation includes the Public Lands Act and the Federal Policy on Wetland Conservation.

Supporting the Wetland Conservation Guide is the Municipal Wetland Conservation Policy, that since March 2009, has been implemented by Strathcona County, developed in consultation with international, national and provincial information and policies. Canadian wetland policies often include a triage approach to wetland conservation, involving complete protection for some wetlands; allowing some activities and development to proceed on other wetlands within limits and providing that impacts are mitigated; and restoration and rehabilitation of previously degraded sites or creation of new wetlands in areas of severe loss (North American Wetlands Conservation Council Canada 1999).

Jocelyn Thrasher-Haug, P.Ag/P. Biol.
Strathcona County

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Working Together

Greetings from the BHI's Executive Director

Welcome to the 14th edition of the BHI newsletter! I encourage you to take a break for a moment and read about the projects the BHI is working on. The BHI is continuing to move forward with science-based projects that will assist our decision makers in planning sustainable communities for today and future generations. Action and tremendous dedication of members and partner agencies are ensuring conservation and stewardship of the environment, fundamental to our quality of life, is not forgotten in these challenging times.

On behalf of the BHI and its partner agencies, I hope some of the projects you read about in our newsletter will be encouraging and you find a moment to go out and explore the many beautiful areas of the Beaver Hills.

Thank you again and as always I look forward to working with you all.

Brenda Wispinski
Executive Director



For a sustainable region,
through shared initiatives
and coordinated action



Fall 2011 Newsletter



BHI Summer Tour

Councillors' Working Group:

The Councillors' Working Group is currently planning the Beaver Hill's Initiative Ten Year Anniversary Conference for September of 2012. We will be hoping to celebrate the approval of our nomination as a UNESCO Biosphere reserve by then.

We are also actively working on a communication strategy with the Education and Communication Working Group.

We as elected officials feel that our top priority is getting the messages and successes of the Beaver Hill's Initiative out to our public!

Jocelyn Mackay, Councillor
Leduc County



Connecting Urbanites to Nature and History:

To celebrate Parks Canada's centennial, in collaboration with Mountain Equipment Co-op and the Edmonton Immigrant Services Association, urban Canadians from Edmonton were invited to learn to camp at Elk Island National Park. In August 2011, approximately 40 new Canadians from a wide range of countries learned how to set up a campsite, how to cook meals outdoors, and how to recognize animal tracks. They also experienced a guided hike, campfire sing-a-long, stargazing, and more.



Parks Canada has worked with various immigration and urban outreach associations across the country to invite new Canadians and young families in urban centres to participate in this special activity. In Edmonton, the Edmonton Immigrant Services Association worked in partnership with Elk Island National Park and Mountain Equipment Co-op to coordinate the event. Similar Learn to Camp events took place during summer 2011 in or near Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Québec City, and Montréal.

Parks Canada and Mountain Equipment Co-op teamed up to host as many as 100 participants per location. The events included workshops and overnight camping at a national park or national historic site, where participants enjoyed a variety of activities, including regular on-site programs, interpretive activities, and camping workshops focused on planning and enjoying safe and memorable camping experiences.

A similar event is already being planned for Elk Island for June, 2012.

Maureen Shenher
Elk Island National Park

Upcoming Events:

October 2011

27 - Camrose County Open House

November 2011

1 - Alberta Art Days at Fort Saskatchewan
3 - Connecting through Stewardship at Strathcona County Community Centre
5-13 - Farm Fair International 2011 at Northlands
8 - World Town Planning Day
17 - Parks Canada Open House at UofA
19 - Ardrossan Country Christmas & Craft Sale
22 - Meet Your Maker 2 at St. Albert
22-24 - AAMDC Fall Convention
26 - Christmas in the Heartland at Josephburg

December 2011

4 - Josephburg Presents [dinner & concert]

January 2012

15 - Josephburg Presents [dinner & concert]

February 2012

14 - Urban Agriculture Luncheon sponsored by Alberta Professional Planners' Institute

March 2012

19-21 - AAMDC Spring Convention

April 2012

3-5 - Water: What is at Risk? Agriculture, Energy and Urban end use - sponsored by Alberta Institute of Agrologists at Banff



Vision: The Beaver Hills Initiative values the region for its natural beauty, quality of life and supports cooperative efforts to sustain the quality of water, land, air, natural resources, and community development.

BHI Partners:

Local Governments

Beaver County,
Camrose County,
Leduc County,
Lamont County,
Strathcona County

Government of Canada

Elk Island National Park, Parks Canada
AESB, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Government of Alberta

Agriculture and Rural Development
Environment
Municipal Affairs
Sustainable Resource Development
Tourism, Parks and Recreation
Alberta Innovates Technology Futures

Academia University of Alberta

Industrial Partners

Alberta Industrial Heartland Association
Fort Air Partnership

Non-Government Organizations

Alberta Invasive Plants Council
Alberta Conservation Association
Alberta Fish and Game Association
Alberta Lake Management Society
Alberta Land Trust Alliance
Alberta Sports Recreation & Wildlife Foundation
Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve
Cosmic Journey
Ducks Unlimited Canada
Edmonton and Area Land Trust
Land Stewardship Centre of Canada
Light Efficient Communities Inc.
Miistakis Institute
Nature Conservancy of Canada
North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance
Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
Worley Parsons

Protected Areas Working Group:



Designation of the Beaver Hills as a Biosphere Reserve would demonstrate that local issues have global relevance

The work of the Protected Areas Working Group continues to concentrate on the preparation of the nomination document that will present the case for the Beaver Hills to be considered as a Biosphere Reserve under the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Man and Biosphere Programme. If successful, the Beaver Hills would join the existing 16 Biosphere Reserves in Canada, and the 580 worldwide that provide practical examples of sustainable development and how people can live and work in harmony with nature.

Designation of the Beaver Hills as a Biosphere Reserve would not only give international recognition and endorsement to the significance of the Beaver Hills and the achievements of the Beaver Hills Initiative to-date but it would acknowledge that the BHI can contribute to finding solutions to global challenges and issues. For example, the Madrid Action for Biosphere Reserves for the period 2008-2013 has identified three global challenges where Biosphere Reserves can play a significant role. They are: (1) climate change, (2) provision of ecosystem services, and (3) urbanization as a principal driver for ecosystem-wide pressures.

Work currently being undertaken by the BHI within the Beaver Hills illustrates the relevance of our local issues to an understanding of all three of these global challenges.

Dr. Guy Swinnerton
Chairperson

