

5.6 BEAVER HILLS POLICY AREA

Conservation of the Beaver Hills Moraine is the primary intent of the Beaver Hills Policy Area identified on Map 2: Rural Service Area. The area is also intended to support agricultural operations, recreation, tourism and limited rural residential. The Beaver Hills Policy Area is home to many wetlands, several lakes and other environmentally significant areas that create a diverse and thriving environment that requires careful management to ensure its resilience. In 2016 the Beaver Hills Moraine was recognized as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Biosphere. The Beaver Hills Biosphere encourages working together for a sustainable region, through shared initiatives and collaborative actions.

► Goal

Strathcona County will continue the conservation of the Beaver Hills Moraine and provide opportunities to live, work and play in harmony with nature.

► Objectives

Strathcona County's objectives are to **ensure** that the Beaver Hills Policy Area:

1. *Provides for the conservation of the Beaver Hills Moraine;*
2. *Provides opportunities for responsible human interactions with nature;*
3. *Strengthen the Beaver Hills Biosphere; and*
4. *Provide opportunities for tourism.*



► Policies Strathcona County Will



Agriculture

Ensure conservation of Beaver Hills Moraine by **requiring**:

1. new or expanded confined feeding operations to locate outside of the Beaver Hills Policy Area.

Promote responsible human interactions with nature by **encouraging**:

2. extensive agricultural operations to complete an Environmental Farm Plan.



Residential

Ensure conservation of the Beaver Hills Moraine by **requiring**:

3. for an unsubdivided, quarter section, that subdivision be limited to:
 - a. a split along a natural or manmade severance; or
 - b. a parcel for an existing residence.
4. the following with regards to residential subdivision:
 - a. the size of a residential parcel shall be limited to the amount of land required to include a residential yardsite;
 - b. residential parcels shall be configured to avoid panhandles and irregular shapes; and
 - c. the location of the residential parcel shall consider the topography and physical features of the quarter section.

Ensure responsible human interactions with nature by **requiring**:

5. that residential forms are limited to single dwellings and associated accessory buildings or collective communal housing supporting the primary agricultural use of the parcel.

The Beaver Hills Biosphere encourages working together for a sustainable region, through shared initiatives and collaborative actions.



Commercial

Ensure conservation of the Beaver Hills Moraine by **requiring**:

6. golf courses to locate in the Agriculture Small Holdings Policy Area, Hamlet Policy Area, or Urban Service Area.

Ensure opportunities for tourism by **requiring**:

7. Area Structure Plans for Seasonal Recreational Resorts to provide direction on:
 - a. transitioning and buffering;
 - b. mitigation measures resulting from an agricultural impact assessment;
 - c. environmental impacts;
 - d. seasonal residential;
 - e. commercial;
 - f. open space, community, recreation;
 - g. transportation; and
 - h. utilities and stormwater management.

Promote opportunities for tourism by **encouraging**:

8. small scale, nature based tourism where the development covers a small land area and has minimal onsite environmental impacts which are mitigated.

9. tourism developments to have the ability to convert uses throughout all four seasons.
10. small scale outdoor commercial recreation where the development has minimal environmental impacts.

Support opportunities for tourism by **considering**:

11. a proposal for an Area Structure Plan, Land Use Bylaw amendment, or subdivision for the purpose of a seasonal bareland recreational resort only when the Seasonal Recreational Resort Districts within the Land Use Bylaw have been adopted.
12. seasonal recreational resorts where the proposed development:
 - a. is a seasonal use;
 - b. is limited to seasonal structures;
 - c. is designed to protect environmental features and mitigate environmental impacts;
 - d. is within, or rezoned to a seasonal recreational resort district;
 - e. has an approved Area Structure Plan;
 - f. provides common property for recreation at a minimum of 10%;
 - g. considers public input;
 - h. is compatible with adjacent land uses; and
 - i. has levels of infrastructure that which meet the requirements of municipal and provincial standards and regulations and limit the resort to seasonal use.

13. subdivision beyond a first parcel out for bareland condominium subdivision where the proposed development is an approved seasonal recreational resort.
14. the development of small scale community commercial within a seasonal recreational resort that are accessory to and serve the day to day needs of the seasonal population of the resort.
15. small scale, agri-tourism where the proposed development covers a small land area and has minimal onsite environmental impacts which are mitigated.
16. large and medium scale nature based tourism or commercial recreation and medium scale agri-tourism where the proposed development:
 - a. mitigates environmental impacts;
 - b. is rezoned to a district consistent with the objectives and policies of the applicable policy area;
 - c. is compatible with adjacent land uses; and
 - d. has levels of infrastructure which meet the requirements of municipal and provincial standards and regulations.
17. home-based businesses where the proposed development:
 - a. does not have an impact beyond the residence and accessory buildings; and
 - b. has levels of infrastructure which meet the requirements of municipal and provincial standards and regulations.



Open Space, Community Services and Schools

Ensure conservation of the Beaver Hills Moraine by **requiring:**

18. municipal reserves as land dedication for residential subdivision.
19. that the form of municipal reserves for stewardship subdivisions is assessed on a case by case basis.
20. new local community services, and schools which service the Beaver Hills Policy Area to locate in the Urban Service Area, Ardrossan or potentially South Cooking Lake.

Ensure opportunities for tourism and recreation by **requiring:**

21. municipal reserve as the following for bareland condominium subdivision:
 - a. as cash-in-lieu;
 - b. as land where the land is needed to provide the desired linkages within the County's Active Transportation Strategy; and
 - c. as land where the municipal reserve would enhance or provide connectivity to an adjacent environmental reserve.



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Promote opportunities for tourism and recreation by **encouraging**:

22. the continued operation of the Strathcona Wilderness Center as a regional park.
23. outdoor festivals where they are temporary in nature and have a negligible impact on the surrounding environment.
24. the creation of new regional parks.



Conservation

Ensure conservation of the Beaver Hills Moraine by **requiring**:

25. large and medium scale developments to maintain wildlife corridor linkages in conformance with a biophysical assessment.
26. environmental reserves in the following forms:
 - a. as environmental reserve lands adjacent to a crown claimed river, stream, lake, natural watercourse or other natural water body where public access is desired;
 - b. as environmental reserve lands where the environmental feature enhances the desired linkages within the County's Active Transportation Strategy;
 - c. as environmental reserve lands where the environmental feature is within an environmentally significant areas; or
 - d. as environmental reserve easement for environmental features identified for conservation within a biophysical assessment.

Support conservation of the Beaver Hills Moraine by **considering**:

27. subdivision beyond a first parcel out where a registered conservation authority will be acquiring the proposed parcel or remnant parcel.

Ensure responsible human interactions with nature by **requiring**:

28. lighting plans for large and medium scale developments that protect the Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve and contribute to Strathcona County being a light efficient community.

Promote responsible human interactions with nature by **encouraging**:

29. developments to retain tree stands where the trees:
 - a. provide protection for watercourses or environmental features; or
 - b. are healthy, of a substantial size and provide biodiversity.

Support responsible human interactions with nature by **considering**:

30. alterations to natural topography only where:
 - a. there is no naturally occurring area suitable for the proposed development on the existing parcel; or
 - b. there is minimal impact.



Industry and Energy

Promote the conservation of the Beaver Hills Moraine by **encouraging**:

31. new resource extraction operations to locate outside of the Beaver Hills Policy Area.
32. new oil and gas facilities to locate outside of the Beaver Hills Policy Area.

Promote the strengthening of the Beaver Hills Biosphere by **encouraging**:

33. the development of small scale productions of renewable sources of energy.



Transportation and Utilities

Ensure responsible human interactions with nature by **requiring**:

34. all development to provide private on-site water and wastewater services.
35. responsible maintenance and provision of drainage corridors and infrastructure.
36. energy efficient and dark sky compliant lighting.
37. that all new parcels have access to a roadway.

