

Legacy Lands

Cross-reference: SER-009-041 Conservation of Biological Diversity
SER-012-011 Land Management

Policy Statement

Strathcona County will identify and acquire land and will use the best available conservation science to protect areas of essential biological diversity and to provide a network of linkages across Strathcona County. The conservation of natural resources will create a legacy of places of importance to Strathcona County for the benefit of its present and future generations.

Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to guide Strathcona County in the development, management, and programming of significant lands with natural value that are added to the County's green infrastructure for conservation.

Definitions

Conservation means the planning, management, and implementation of an activity with the objective of protecting the essential physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the environment against degradation.

Guidelines

Legacy Lands Program Report

The County will maintain a Legacy Lands Program Report. This report will contain specific assessment criteria and management requirements for the County's Legacy Lands. It will also contain a model to prioritize natural areas according to their ecological significance. The goal of the Legacy Lands program is to expand existing conservation areas, particularly wildlife corridors, and buffers and linkages between municipally, provincially, and federally protected lands.

Assessing Lands

Natural areas are assessed by size, species, habitat, ecological function, biodiversity, landscape, connectivity, geology, scientific potential, aesthetics, location, development pressure, economic viability, and management requirements. Potential Legacy Lands are evaluated based on ecological content, biodiversity, special features, relative location, and ecological function. Assessment will be completed by a qualified professional (e.g. professional biologist, professional agrologist, etc).

When assessing lands, particular land protection tools should be considered, including designation as a Municipal Reserve, Environmental Reserve, or Conservation Reserve.

Lands that may be added to the Legacy Lands program will be regularly reviewed to identify required capital improvements, including trails and signage.

Use of Legacy Lands

Lands held as part of the Legacy Lands program will be kept in a natural state to the greatest extent possible. The primary objective of holding lands as Legacy Lands is conservation of biological diversity and natural resources. As a result, development on Legacy Lands will be limited to trails and interpretive signage that may be used to enhance programming opportunities.

If Legacy Lands are development for recreational use, programming will be provided on a limited scale. The focus will be on natural interpretation opportunities, with all programming to be determined using the best available conservation science.

Each site in the Legacy Lands program is unique. Prior uses, including agricultural activities, will be considered to determine if they will be permitted to continue. Where practical and necessary due to prior uses, each site will have a site-specific management plan. In cases where this is not practical, the sites will fall under the County's general Legacy Lands site management plan.

Policy Record

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Replaces: N/A

Administrative Review: Planning and Development Services

Approved by:

Signed - Darrell Reid

Chief Commissioner

August 1, 2023

Date