

Conserving wetlands in Strathcona County



Permanent wetland



Seasonal wetland



Unauthorized disturbance to a wetland

Strathcona County will ensure the conservation of wetlands during the process of developing land and constructing buildings and infrastructure. All development initiated by a landowner or a third party, including Strathcona County, is subject to a new policy.

Strathcona County has a Wetland Conservation Policy to realize the goal of No Net Loss of wetlands within the urban and rural area.

What is a wetland?

A wetland is defined as land having:

1. water table at, near, or above the land surface
2. poorly drained (hydric) soils which are saturated for a long enough period to promote aquatic processes
3. water loving (hydrophytic) plants and various kinds of biological activity which are adapted to a wet environment

What is No Net Loss?

No Net Loss of wetland functions is to balance the loss of wetland functions, through rehabilitation of former degraded wetlands or enhancement of healthy, functioning wetlands.

No Net Loss requires proponents to work through a strict series of mitigation activities with clear criteria and defined outcomes, as set out by the legislation.

Legislation

- Water Act
- Public Lands Act
- Federal Policy on Wetland Conservation
- Provincial Wetland Restoration/Compensation Guide

Mitigation activities

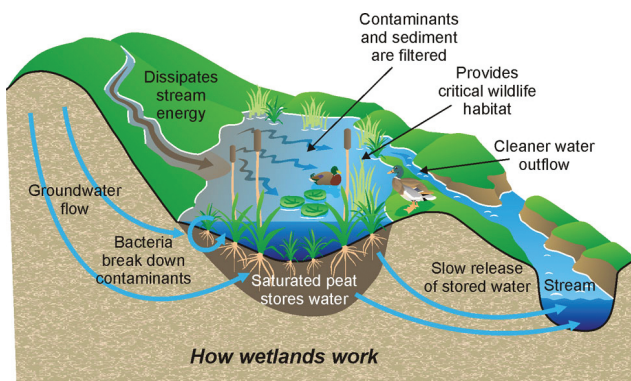
Mitigation is a process to reduce loss of wetland by:

1. Avoidance to wetland damage or destruction
2. Minimization of the impact and provision of applicable compensation
3. Compensation for wetland damage or destruction

Did you know?

Approximately 70 per cent of wetlands have been lost in Alberta to agricultural, industrial and urban land development in the last 50 years.

Wetlands make a difference to our environmental health



- reduce the greenhouse effect by acting as a carbon sink, removing carbon from CO₂ and releasing oxygen
- improve water quality through filtration, as water passes through a wetland, impurities are removed
- provide natural purification and storage of freshwater
- recharge groundwater by storing surface water and letting some of it seep back into the ground where it's filtered further
- reduce the effects of drought
- reduce the effects of flooding and soil erosion by storing runoff water and releasing it slowly downstream
- support biodiversity and providing habitat for plants, birds, mammals and fish
- protect natural shorelines from wave action and erosion
- reduce water pollution (settle out, trap and hold sediment, heavy metals, and hydrocarbons)

Wetlands make a difference to our economic health

- reduce water quality improvements costs (natural filtration reduces engineering water treatment needs)
- reduce flooding and protecting private property
- increase property value

Wetlands increase our quality of life

- add beauty to the community
- improve human health by influencing our physical and mental well-being
- provide opportunities for hunting, trapping and fishing
- provide opportunities for tourism and recreation (boating, bird watching, nature photography)

Further information

Jocelyn Thrasher-Haug, Engineering & Environmental Planning, will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Call: 780-416-6713 (Weekdays 8:30 a.m – 4:30 p.m.)