
Conservation and Environmental Reserve Easements

References: *Alberta Land Stewardship Act, S.A. 2009, c. A-26.8*
 Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, RSA 2000, c. E-12
 Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c. M-26

Cross-reference: SER-009-041 Conservation of Biological Diversity

Policy Statement

Strathcona County will work with landowners with the goal of conserving biological diversity within the County. Strathcona County can use Conservation Easements and Environmental Reserve Easements to help build an inventory of protected areas within the County, on lands that continue to be privately owned.

Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to set out circumstances when Strathcona County will work with landowners with the goal of conserving biological diversity on private lands through the use of Conservation Easements or Environmental Reserve Easements. The intent is to acknowledge the landowner's previous and continuing environmental stewardship and to continue the appropriate use and management of the area in the context of development.

Definitions

Biophysical Assessment means an assessment conducted pursuant to Strathcona County's *Biophysical Assessment* directive.

Conservation Easement Agreement means a binding voluntary legal agreement between Strathcona County and a landowner for the purposes of conserving biological diversity. The agreement is registered on the title of the land in perpetuity.

Environmental Reserve Easement means an Environmental Reserve Easement as defined in the *Municipal Government Act*.

Guidelines

The County will promote the conservation of biological diversity on private lands through voluntary or legislatively required Conservation Easement and Environmental Reserve Easement Agreements.

The County will assess lands, identified by the landowner or the County, for suitability as Conservation Easement or Environmental Reserve Easement. The County will then provide

information to the landowner about the easement process, and will draft the easement agreement.

The County will regularly inspect Conservation Easement and Environmental Reserve Easement lands for compliance with agreement terms and conditions, and statutory requirements.

Statutory Plans and Subdivision

During statutory planning and evaluation processes each property will be assessed for potential Conservation Easement or Environmental Reserve Easement lands. A Biophysical Assessment may be required for voluntary easements, and will be required for County-required easements

Where lands that are the subject of a subdivision application have provided municipal reserves in full pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act*, Strathcona County may, where identified through a Biophysical Assessment, negotiate with the applicant the dedication of a Conservation Easement or Environmental Reserve Easement for lands that have been assessed as having significant natural value, landscape features, high biological diversity or that will provide community benefits.

Where lands that are the subject of a subdivision application have municipal reserve or environmental reserves outstanding pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act*, Strathcona County may, where identified through a Biophysical Assessment, negotiate with the applicant for the dedication of a Conservation Easement or Environmental Reserve Easement for lands that have been assessed as having significant natural value, landscape features, high biological diversity or that will provide community benefits.

Policy Record

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Approved by:

Signed - Darrell Reid

Chief Commissioner

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Date