



Battle River Watershed Alliance

Aligning Land Use & Development Policy with Watershed Management
Recommendations

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

January 2025

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1. OVERVIEW

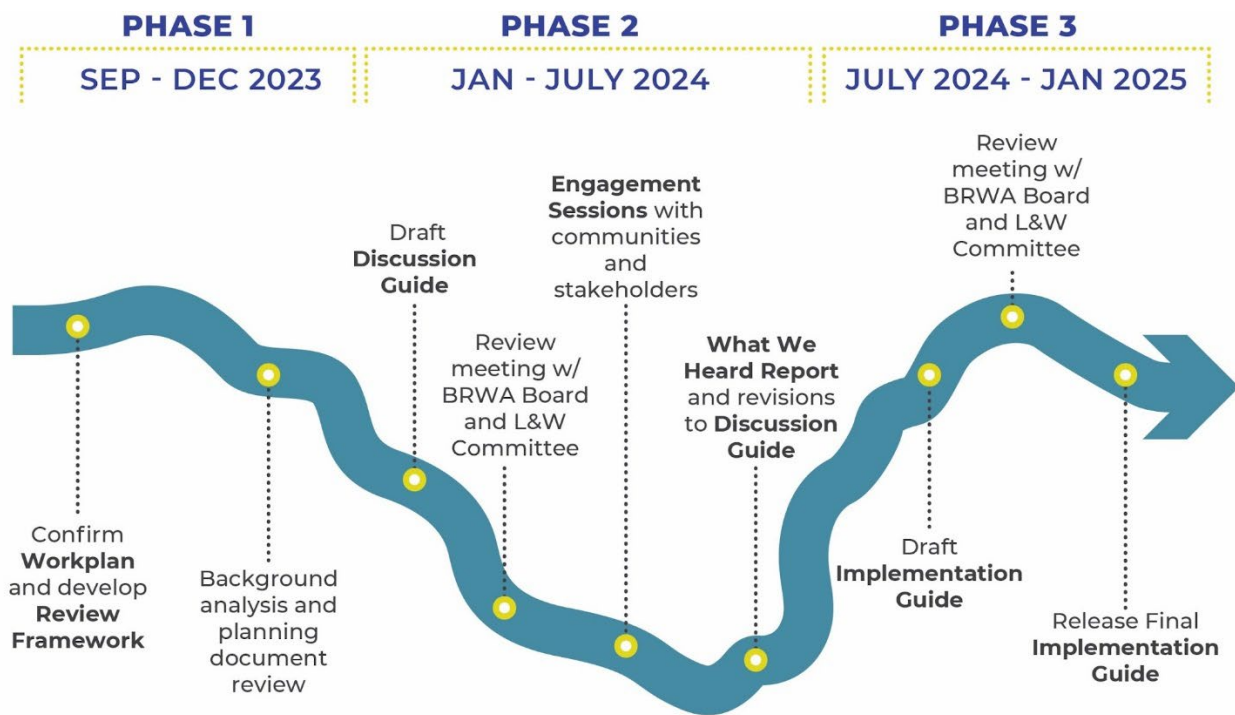
The Battle River Watershed Alliance Society (BRWA) is a non-profit organization and one of 11 Watershed Planning Advisory Councils under Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability. BRWA engaged Municipal Planning Services (MPS) to prepare discussion and implementation guides for municipalities, First Nations and the Métis Nation of Alberta within the Battle River and Sounding Creek Watersheds.

BRWA aims to improve consistency in land management practices throughout the Battle River and Sounding Creek watersheds and to support the long-term health, protection and ecological restoration within these watersheds. The discussion and implementation guides are intended to improve awareness about how communities are currently implementing watershed management recommendations and environmental land management practices into land use planning documents. They also identify opportunities for communities to take further action to achieve watershed resilience and sustainability. This project will provide the Battle River and Sounding Creek communities policy recommendations and tools to incorporate into their own plans and policies.

This project is taking place in 3 phases:

- Phase 1: Research & Policy Review
- Phase 2a: Discussion Guide for Aligning Land Use Policy and Watershed Management Goals
- Phase 2b: Engagement with Municipal & Indigenous Leaders & Administrators
- Phase 3: Implementation Guides for Watershed Management Policies

This **What We Heard Report** outlines the feedback received from Phase 2 engagement. Two workshops were held in April of 2024 to discuss findings from the draft Discussion Guide and seek participant feedback.



2. WHAT WE HEARD

This section summarizes ‘What We Heard’ from communities within the Battle River and Sounding Creek watersheds during the April 2024 Workshops.

Summary of Feedback

ALIGNING LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT POLICY WITH WATERSHED MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS WORKSHOPS

Dates: April 12, 2024 (in person) and April 17, 2024 (virtual)

Two workshop sessions were held to present the Discussion Guide to local leaders and administrators. The purpose of the workshops was to explore areas of alignment and non-alignment that were identified in the inventory and to seek feedback from BRWA communities. The first workshop was an in-person session held at the Mirror Lake Centre in Camrose. The 2nd Workshop was an online workshop hosted using Zoom. At the workshops, the project team (BRWA and MPS) presented background information on the project, provided an overview of the findings, and facilitated interactive workshops. These workshops focused on three areas of the Discussion Guide which featured the least alignment or were of particular concern to BRWA and MPS. These three areas were Riparian Area Management, Point and Non-Point Source Pollution Management, and Habitat Conservation and Management.

The April 12th session had 14 participants, and the April 17th session had 5 participants, excluding BRWA and MPS staff.

The following tables contain a summary of the feedback received from participants during the workshops.

Note: following the conclusion of the workshops, Camrose County provided a letter to BRWA member municipalities with additional comments on the Discussion Guide. This letter has been appended to the What We Heard Report as Appendix B.

Riparian Area Management Feedback

PROMPT	WHAT WE HEARD	RESPONSE/RECOMMENDATION
Challenges/Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Restricting development in riparian areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Defining watercourses, waterbodies, and development ○ Knowledge of hydrology and topography ○ Lack of stormwater management plans or drainage information • Topic: Establishing protection and conservation areas around riparian Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishing ESAs and not having them reduced ○ Education around ESAs ○ Finding ways to effectively and strategically communicate the benefits of wetlands and riparian areas ○ Some municipalities have old Municipal Development Plans that have not been updated to consider newer strategies such as ESAs and flood mapping • Topic: Establishing a 30m naturally vegetated area on each side of watercourses to protect riparian areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sometimes there are a large variety/quantity of riparian areas to consider within the jurisdiction ○ A 30m naturally vegetated buffer might not be the best guideline for all areas (for example, the badlands can be further than 30m) ○ Again, finding ways to effectively and strategically communicate the benefits • Topic: Minimum of 75% of riparian areas are naturally vegetated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Managing vegetation in its natural state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of the challenges in this area were related to education or communication. Understanding the value of riparian areas and being able to effectively communicate that information in way that it tailored to an individual's role is an important skill for municipalities in the pursuit of better riparian area management.

<p>Opportunities for Better Alignment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Restricting development in riparian areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explicit intention of municipalities to work with Indigenous communities • Topic: Including setbacks and buffer zones for riparian areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Incentives for the utilization of native species in urban development (potential financial incentives?) • Topic: Establishing protection and conservation areas around riparian Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recognizing and appreciating the people who are protecting riparian areas • Topic: Establishing a 30m naturally vegetated area on each side of watercourses to protect riparian areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ change the wording to “distance from the top of bank” ○ Some municipalities have a policy that makes the buffer at the discretion of the Subdivision Authority. They want the flexibility to figure out the appropriate distance on a case-by-case basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to frame the discussion depending on the audience is again an important skill for municipalities when discussing the incentives of utilizing riparian management strategies. • There are some discrepancies in the 30m guideline, such as where it is measured from, whether lakefront houses exist closer than the 30m, etc. Whether or not guidelines are reasonable will directly relate to how/whether they are implemented.
<p>Additional Comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The context is different between rural and urban areas • Smaller municipalities lean on larger municipalities for advice, specialized knowledge, teaching, etc. Whoever has the best plan tends to share that knowledge with the rest of the communities in the area. • Wetlands are also considered a riparian area • Municipal Development Plans need to take a stronger position on Riparian Area Management and include more policies • Language and definitions need to be closely considered (for example, 1 in 100-year flood) • Rather than having a setback of buffer from water bodies, the municipality falls back on Alberta Environment and flood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size and composition of municipalities throughout these watersheds varies greatly, which is important to consider in the creation of guidelines. Recommendations that consider different perspectives and opportunities for collaboration will be helpful to the smaller municipalities with fewer resources.

	<p>mapping software. The floodway and flood fringe can be utilized as an indirect way of acquiring riparian protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need considerations for the inherent right to harvest in riparian areas, cultural presentations, and protection of species • Policy continuity: riparian conservation information could be located in the Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP), flow down into the Municipal Development Plans (MDPs), and then flow into different departments at a more tailored level (cost/benefit) 	
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Point & Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Feedback

PROMPT	WHAT WE HEARD	RESPONSE/RECOMMENDATION
Challenges/Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Limiting the development of Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs) within effective drainage areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who is recognized as a “directly affected party” in these processes? ○ CFOs are not the only concern- also need to identify other nonpoint sources (including energy, industry, and other agricultural operations) • Topic: Prohibiting manure application in riparian areas and floodplains <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensuring that watercourses and water quality are protected ○ Manure application can exceed the carrying capacity of the land and its ability to absorb nutrients, leading to runoff ○ Regulations may be punitive or restrictive to small agricultural uses ○ Landowner rights and responsibilities • Topic: Adhering to manure application setbacks for land sloping towards surface waterbodies outlined in AOPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants noted that point and nonpoint source pollution extends beyond CFOs and across multiple industries. Manure application was a topic of concern with respondents exhibiting a desire to protect riparian areas and floodplains while also considering landowner rights and the viability of smaller agricultural uses. • Several challenges arose around the topic of low impact development. Participants noted a need for greater education around LID in order to demonstrate its usefulness and increase its political viability.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Defining pressures specific to the region ● Topic: Integrating low impact development (LID) techniques for stormwater management in new development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education and political viability of low impact development techniques ○ Some people consider native or natural landscapes to be unsightly, and bylaws can limit the opportunities to integrate LID ○ Long-range goals and cumulative impacts ○ Some municipalities have the intention of integrating natural vegetation into areas; some have designed stormwater ponds more in terms of functionality without taking species into consideration ○ More language is needed around low-impact development in stormwater management plans 	
Opportunities for Better Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Topic: Integrating low-impact development techniques for stormwater management in new development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Addressing the topic from an incentives approach rather than a regulations approach (if regulations cause public upset then perhaps incentivizing is the better strategy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This is an important consideration that echoes the previous theme of framing discussions in a way that is effective for the particular audience at hand. This is a good example of a proactive strategy that may help to mitigate upset.
Additional Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Also need to ensure inclusivity around different ways of knowing and recognize the importance of Indigenous knowledge and techniques ● It is important that MDPs and IDPs clearly articulate ESA priorities ● Enforcement is a provincial responsibility, so what role do the municipalities have here? ● Discussion relating to aggregate extraction and CFOs identified that testing of winter snow storage sites has resulted in reclamation being needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Potential to include information related to winter snow storage in the discussion guide.

Habitat Conservation & Management Feedback

PROMPT	WHAT WE HEARD	RESPONSE/RECOMMENDATION
Challenges/Barriers to Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Maintaining natural habitat corridors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tying the topic into other aspects of water and introducing it is a related concern ○ Increased costs of development ○ Education, access to data and information ○ Identifying economic incentives, barriers, and opportunities for restoring and maintaining natural habitat • Topic: Incorporating ESAs in municipal policies related to environmental protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Messaging around ESAs, provincial enforcement • Topic: Integrating local ESAs into development project criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encouraging the documentation of ESAs • Topic: Introducing policy to create, protect, and restore natural assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Having an inventory of these assets ○ It is hard to prioritize, especially when there is contamination present (costly to remediate) and there are other high-priority projects on the go that need the attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The documentation of ESAs and their inclusion in planning documents will help to ensure that they are highly visible to those looking to develop and will be considered in the development process. • One municipality noted that a large portion of their current developable land was brownfield and that it is very expensive to reclaim these lands to redevelop them. This situation is an example of why it is worthwhile to incur upfront costs related to habitat conservation, rather than being reactionary and incurring much larger costs later on. • Sometimes saying yes to a project instead of standing your ground and saying no leads to additional requirements and costs- consultations, assessments, reclamation, etc. This is important to emphasize to decision-makers.
Opportunities for Better Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic: Maintaining natural habitat corridors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Utilizing available data, adding it to plans and reports ○ Utilizing citizen science to protect and support wildlife species (for example, bird and bat boxes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increasing number of tools and data are available to municipalities. Increased accessibility of this data and its inclusion in policy documents will provide additional fact-based, research-driven information that municipalities can use to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finding ways to open more doors to protect habitat across jurisdictions • Topic: Incorporating ESAs in municipal policies related to environmental protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tying in lands protected through other means (such as EALT, NCC, reserves) • Topic: Integrating local ESAs into development project criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaborative assessment (intermunicipal collaboration, Indigenous collaboration) ○ Incorporating other planning documents that consider green spaces (such as the City of Camrose's Green Space Master Plan) 	<p>support their watershed management and conservation efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding ways to open more doors across jurisdictions to protect habitat, some strategies to consider are joint stormwater management plans, regional watershed plans, and including hydrology maps in an MDP to show how water flows through an area. Being able to visualize impacts can impact the decision-making process.
Additional Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan inform broader landscape habitat goals? • Metis government projects include a terrestrial cumulative effects initiative, a national urban parks project, and an aquatic habitat restoration fund • Consider projects that contribute to the protection of harvesting rights and the protection of ecosystems • Environmental topics can be present in many places besides just the MDP- could be in IDPs, environmental planning strategies, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even if other policies are in place to address environmental concerns, it is still useful to note these policies in the MDP so that they may be easily located and referred to.

General Feedback

WHAT WE HEARD	RESPONSE/RECOMMENDATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is not just about following the process, but also knowing and understanding the “whys” ○ Providing thought-provoking information delivery vs information dumps 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Priorities are different between urban and rural governments ○ Council should be provided with tools for decision-makers ○ Decisions should be based on facts rather than hearsay- the importance of presenting fact-based information 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is useful to consider ways to incorporate risk and cost into the discussion- making deliberate language choices and framing it in the right way 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is helpful to take a proactive rather than a reactive approach in terms of dealing with polarizing opinions and interpretations 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BRWA should disclose that the review questions don’t always apply to smaller municipalities 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are hopes for deliverables tailored to two streams- one for elected officials that contains summarized and simplified information, and one with guidelines for the people who are drafting the policies 	Recommendation: MPS and BRWA to develop a fact sheet to accompany the discussion guide. The focus of this fact sheet will be to provide an “easy reading” summary of key recommendations, benefits, costs, risks, etc. that is tailored to municipal decision-makers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an interest in more information on tools that can be utilized to promote these goals: GIS layers, landslide tools, flood mapping, etc. 	Recommendation: MPS and BRWA to compile a list of tools and resources and make this list available to communities within the watersheds.

APPENDIX A: WORKSHOP PRESENTATION



ALIGNING LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT POLICY WITH WATERSHED MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Battle River Watershed Alliance – Land & Water Committee | April 17, 2024

OUTLINE

- Welcome and Introductions
- Workshop Purpose
- Presentation: About the Discussion Guide
- Overview of Survey Findings
- Overview of Workshop Sessions
- Break (5 min)
- Workshops
 - 1: Riparian Area Management (35 min)
 - 2: Water Quantity – Point & Non-Point Source Pollution (25 mins)
 - 3: Biodiversity – Habitat Conservation (25 mins)
- About the Implementation Guides & Next Steps

WELCOME

Land Acknowledgement

The Battle River and Sounding Creek watersheds have been the home, meeting ground and travelling route for many Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial.

We gratefully acknowledge the traditional territory and ongoing presence of Indigenous Peoples and Nations within these watersheds. Their experiences, teachings, knowledge, and wisdom inform and enrich our collective efforts to care for the land and water of this region.

These watersheds are in the **Otipemisiwak Métis Government Districts 2, 3, 8, 11, and 12**, and are also within **Treaty 6 and 7 territory**.

Fulfilling the spirit and intent of these treaties is an ongoing process, and the Battle River Watershed Alliance is committed to building strong and respectful relationships with the Indigenous Peoples of this land, with all living beings, and with the land and water on which we all depend.



INTRODUCTIONS

Battle River Watershed Alliance

- Catherine Peirce, Executive Director
- Sarah Skinner, Watershed Programs Manager
- Morgan Lievers, Environmental Program Coordinator

MPS

- Jane Dauphinee, Principal & Senior Planner

Ice Breaker Question:

Take 2 minutes to **highlight one project in your community** that supports water and biodiversity.



PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- Improve consistency in land management practices throughout the watersheds and support the long-term health, protection and ecological restoration within the Battle River and Sounding Creek watersheds.
- Provide Battle River and Sounding Creek communities with knowledge-based policy recommendations and tools to incorporate into municipal development plans and the management policies or plans of Indigenous communities to support
 - water quantity
 - water quality
 - biodiversity
 - land management

PROJECT PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

Methodology and Process

PHASE 1	Research and Policy Review <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a survey to assess if community policy documents include watershed management planning recommendations• Select sample plans (31 of 63 MDPs selected) to include in the survey that represent a range of municipalities within the watershed• Compile and analyze survey data
PHASE 2A	Discussion Guide for Aligning Policies and Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare Discussion Guide• Identify alignment/non-alignment between BRWA recommendations and the MDPs• Identify recommendations to highlight highest priority areas for better alignment, the largest gaps in alignment, and the greatest alignment successes.• Share successes in the discussion guide.
PHASE 2B	Engagement with Municipal/Indigenous Leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Host informal workshops for leaders/administrators within the watersheds
PHASE 3	Implementation Guides for Watershed Management Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare general implementation guides with sample policy language



**WHERE
WE
ARE**

WORKSHOP PURPOSE

- **Snapshot** of the findings from the draft Discussion Guide
- **Discuss** draft findings and recommendations from Plan Component in those areas where the data analysis identifies the lowest alignment
- **Learn** about how your communities' current policies compare to the findings
- **Seek direction** from participants about what would provide the greatest value to include in the discussion guides to help address current challenges





PRESENTATION:

About the Discussion Guide

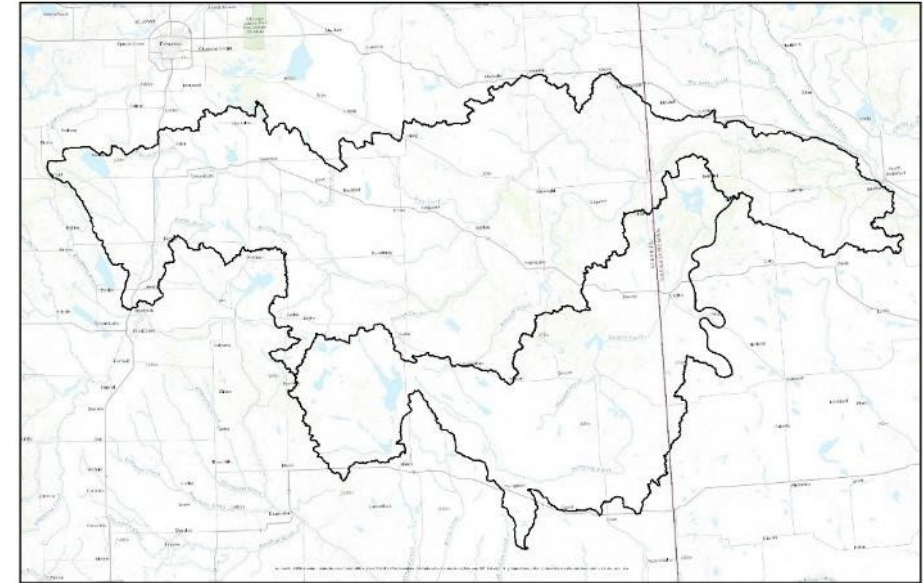
ABOUT THE DISCUSSION GUIDE

About the Watersheds

- Information about the environmental/physical features of:
 - Battle River Watershed
 - Sounding Creek Watershed

Local Government Land Use Planning Tools

- Local governments within the watersheds
- Significance of municipal policies and regulations
- First Nation policy and programs
- Otipemisiwak Métis Government policy and programs
- Limitations and applicability



ABOUT THE DISCUSSION GUIDE

Policy Review Framework

- The BRWA's Watershed Management Planning Process integrates four watershed management priorities as a framework for supporting the health and sustainability of the watersheds
- Both published and draft recommendations as well as regional and related management plans were reviewed to inform our survey of land use and development policies

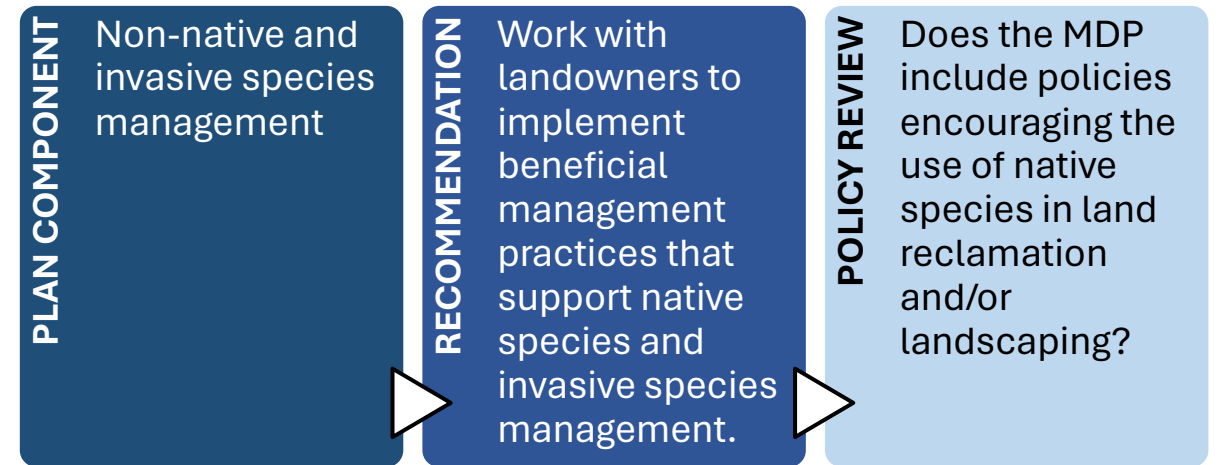


ABOUT THE DISCUSSION GUIDE

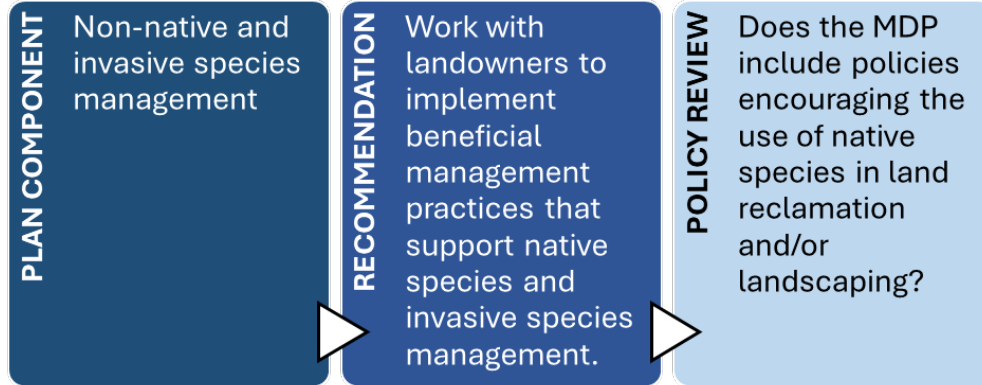
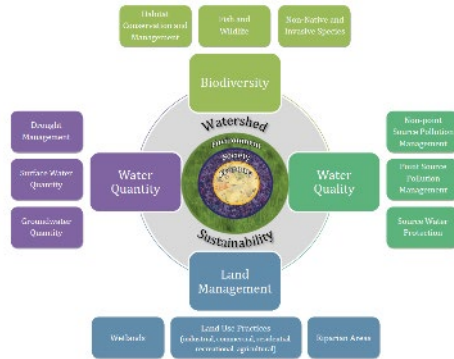
Policy Review Framework

- Plan components and specific recommendations informed the policy review questions used to assess how land use policies currently align with BRWA watershed management priorities, as expressed in the plan components.

Planning Policy Review Process



ABOUT THE DISCUSSION GUIDE



WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLANNING PRIORITIES	PLAN COMPONENTS	BRWA RECOMMENDATION AREAS
Water Quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drought Management • Surface Water Quantity • Ground Water Quantity 	3
Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-point Source Pollution Management • Point Source Pollution Management • Source Water Protection 	8
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat Conservation and Management • Non-Native/Invasive Species Management 	4
Land Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetland Management • Riparian Areas Management 	11

ABOUT THE DISCUSSION GUIDE

What have we learned?

1. Governance & administration of land within the watersheds is complex

- 63 municipalities within the watersheds
- 4 Maskwacis Cree First Nations
- Otipemisiwak Métis Government
- Government of Alberta
- Federal Government

2. Land use planning is complex

- There is jurisdictional overlap in some areas (i.e. water bodies)
- Communities have different tools and approaches to manage land use and development
- One size fits all approach is unrealistic

ABOUT THE DISCUSSION GUIDE

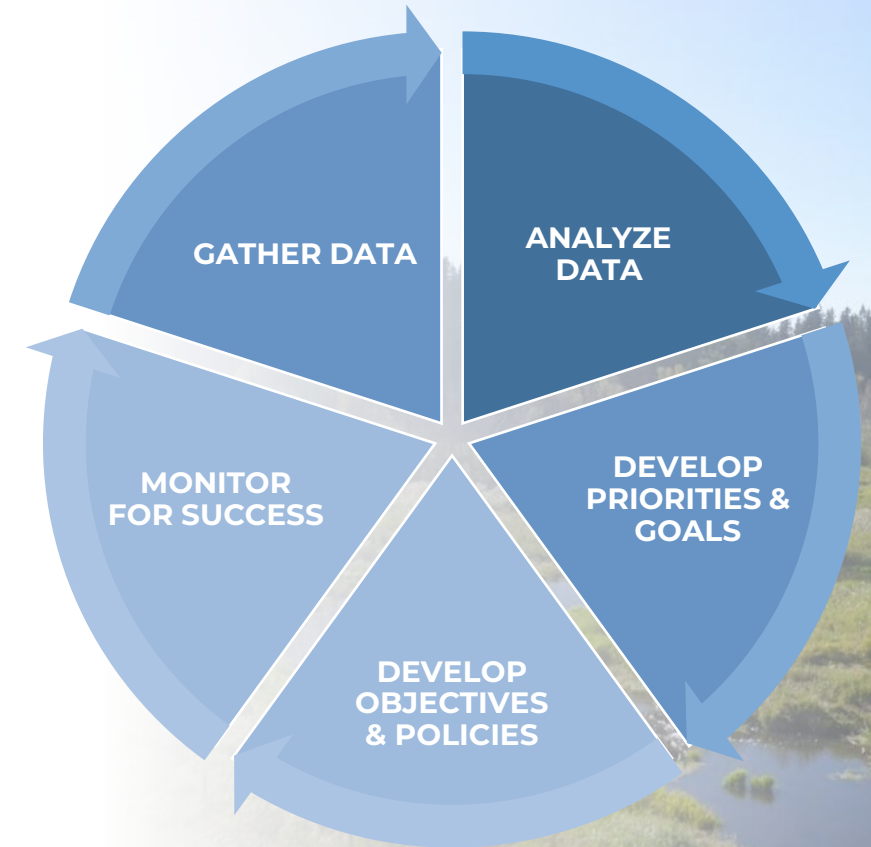
What have we learned?

3. Adopting a knowledge-based approach to developing land management plans and plan administration provides benefits

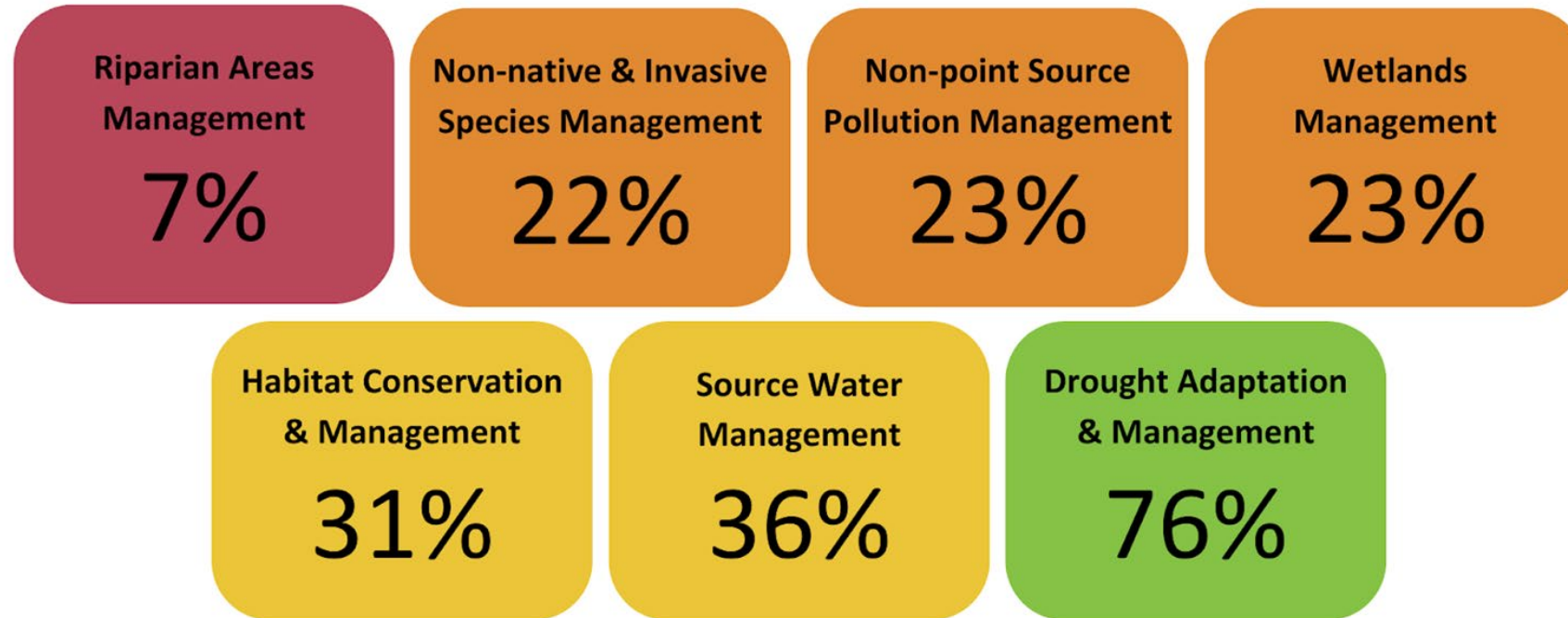
- Improves transparency
- Can be measured/monitored
- Justifies decision-making

4. We can all learn from and support each other

- Efficiencies in working together
- Organizational capacity is limited everywhere
- We all benefit from the sharing of data and resources

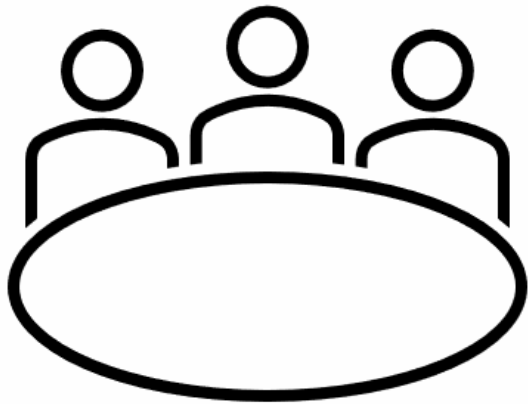


OVERVIEW OF SURVEY FINDINGS



WORKSHOP SESSIONS

1. Land Management – Riparian Areas Management (7%)
2. Water Quality – Point & Non-Point Source Pollution (23%)
3. Biodiversity – Habitat Conservation (31%)



What we need from you!

- Review Handout materials
- Participate in Discussion
- Provide Feedback to Help:
 - Verify the data
 - Shape the Implementation Guides



BREAK

Meet back in 5 minutes!

WORKSHOP

1. Land Management – Riparian Areas Management (35 mins)

Discussion:

1. Challenges/Barriers to Implementation
2. Opportunities for Better Alignment
3. Additional Comments



WORKSHOP

1. Land Management – Riparian Areas Management, Page 46 (35 mins)

PLAN PRIORITY	MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	MDP POLICIES	YES	NO	PARTIAL
Riparian areas management	Restrict development in riparian areas.	Does the MDP provide policies specifically related to riparian areas?	6	18	7
		Does the MDP restrict development within or in proximity to riparian areas?	3	24	4
	Include provisions for setbacks and buffer zones for riparian areas.	Does the MDP include policies related to setbacks or buffers from riparian areas?	5	18	8
	Establish protection and conservation areas around riparian ESAs.	Does the MDP identify Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) within the municipality?	12	15	4
		Does the MDP include policies related to protecting ESAs?	5	18	8
		Does the MDP establish a minimum setback from watercourses?	10	18	3

WORKSHOP

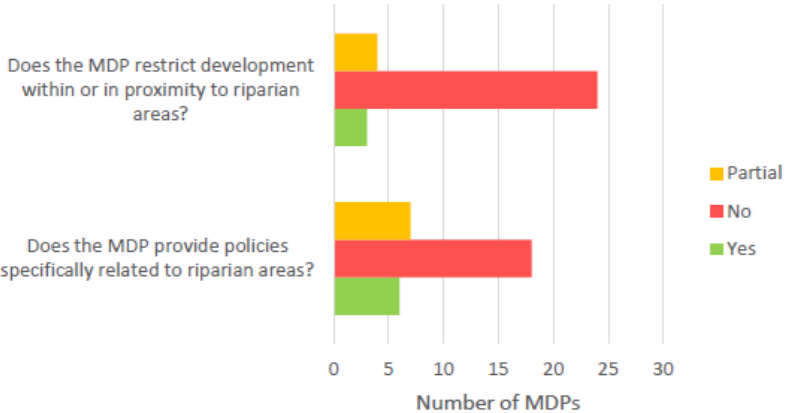
1. Land Management – Riparian Areas Management, Page 47 (35 mins)

	Establish minimum 30-metre-wide naturally vegetated areas adjacent to each side of watercourses to protect riparian areas.	Does the MDP require the retention of natural vegetation within watercourse setbacks?	4	23	4
	Require increased riparian protection areas where habitat functionality requires greater setbacks.	Does the MDP include policies or triggers for increased or additional riparian setbacks to protect or enhance habitat function?	2	29	0
	Ensure a minimum of 75% of riparian areas are naturally vegetated.	Does the MDP identify minimum targets for the retention of natural vegetation in riparian areas or riparian intactness?	0	31	0
	Manage riparian impacts related to aggregate extraction development.	Does the MDP include policies that would limit aggregate (sand and gravel) extraction or require mitigations/restoration where this type of development is proposed in a riparian area?	1	29	1
		Does the MDP include policies specifically related to minimizing impacts to riparian areas resulting from aggregate extraction developments?	0	31	0

WORKSHOP

1. Land Management – Riparian Areas Management, Page 48 (35 mins)

RIPARIAN AREAS MANAGEMENT

BRWA RECOMMENDATION 21													
Restrict development in riparian areas.													
POLICY REVIEW RESULTS													
AREA(S) OF ALIGNMENT	• 42% of MDPs surveyed include policies specifically related to riparian areas												
	• 23% of MDPs surveyed restrict development within or in proximity to riparian areas												
AREAS FOR ENHANCEMENT: GAPS IN POLICY SHOW...	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Absence of definitions to clarify policy terms and provide consistency in interpretation of terms and triggers.Absence of clear development restrictions for some use classes or types of development in riparian areas.Where policies exist to restrict development in riparian areas, they tend to be specific to riparian areas around water bodies and do not include riparian areas around watercourses.</div> <div><p>Does the MDP restrict development within or in proximity to riparian areas?</p><p>Does the MDP provide policies specifically related to riparian areas?</p><table><thead><tr><th>Question</th><th>Partial</th><th>No</th><th>Yes</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Does the MDP restrict development within or in proximity to riparian areas?</td><td>4</td><td>24</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Does the MDP provide policies specifically related to riparian areas?</td><td>7</td><td>18</td><td>6</td></tr></tbody></table></div>	Question	Partial	No	Yes	Does the MDP restrict development within or in proximity to riparian areas?	4	24	3	Does the MDP provide policies specifically related to riparian areas?	7	18	6
Question	Partial	No	Yes										
Does the MDP restrict development within or in proximity to riparian areas?	4	24	3										
Does the MDP provide policies specifically related to riparian areas?	7	18	6										
CHALLENGES OR BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shortage of resources and/or internal capacity to evaluate and incorporate riparian areas into MDPs.Costs associated with undertaking individual biophysical assessments increase the costs of development.Potential for perceived conflicts between traditional grazing practices and establishment of development restrictions in riparian areas.												
OPPORTUNITIES FOR BETTER ALIGNMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where the data is available, identify and incorporate existing riparian area intactness survey information into the MDP to enable the setting and monitoring of riparian area intactness targets.Include definitions for terms used relating to riparian area.Include policy direction that supports partnerships with organizations including Cows and Fish to share information about Beneficial Management Practices for grazing near riparian areas.Identify clear triggers for when the identification and delineation of riparian areas will be required as part of the ASP development process or part of subdivision or development applications.												

WORKSHOP

1. Land Management – Riparian Areas Management, Page 46 (35 mins)

PLAN PRIORITY	MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	MDP POLICIES	YES	NO	PARTIAL
Riparian areas management	Restrict development in riparian areas.	Does the MDP provide policies specifically related to riparian areas?	6	18	7
		Does the MDP restrict development within or in proximity to riparian areas?	3	24	4
	Include provisions for setbacks and buffer zones for riparian areas.	Does the MDP include policies related to setbacks or buffers from riparian areas?	5	18	8
	Establish protection and conservation areas around riparian ESAs.	Does the MDP identify Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) within the municipality?	12	15	4
		Does the MDP include policies related to protecting ESAs?	5	18	8
		Does the MDP establish a minimum setback from watercourses?	10	18	3

Discussion - Raise your hand to speak and add your comments in the chat

Challenges/Barriers to Implementation | Opportunities for Alignment | Comments

WORKSHOP

1. Land Management – Riparian Areas Management, Page 46 (35 mins)

		Does the MDP establish a minimum setback from watercourses?	10	18	3
	Establish minimum 30-metre-wide naturally vegetated areas adjacent to each side of watercourses to protect riparian areas.	Does the MDP require the retention of natural vegetation within watercourse setbacks?	4	23	4
	Require increased riparian protection areas where habitat functionality requires greater setbacks.	Does the MDP include policies or triggers for increased or additional riparian setbacks to protect or enhance habitat function?	2	29	0
	Ensure a minimum of 75% of riparian areas are naturally vegetated.	Does the MDP identify minimum targets for the retention of natural vegetation in riparian areas or riparian intactness?	0	31	0
	Manage riparian impacts related to aggregate extraction development.	Does the MDP include policies that would limit aggregate (sand and gravel) extraction or require mitigations/restoration where this type of development is proposed in a riparian area?	1	29	1
		Does the MDP include policies specifically related to minimizing impacts to riparian areas resulting from aggregate extraction developments?	0	31	0

Discussion - Raise your hand to speak and add your comments in the chat

Challenges/Barriers to Implementation | Opportunities for Alignment | Comments

WORKSHOP

2. Water Quantity – Point & Non-Point Source Pollution (25 mins)

Discussion:

1. Challenges/Barriers to Implementation
2. Opportunities for Better Alignment
3. Additional Comments



WORKSHOP

2. Water Quantity – Point & Non-Point Source Pollution, Page 25 (25 mins)

PLAN PRIORITY	MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	MDP POLICY REVIEW	YES	NO	PARTIAL
Non-point source pollution management	Limit the development of new Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs) within the effective drainage area of Battle River and Sounding Creek watersheds.	Does the MDP include policies restricting CFOs in proximity to environmentally sensitive areas, watercourses, wetlands, or water bodies?	11	18	2
	Prohibit manure application in riparian areas and floodplains.	Does the MDP include policies restricting manure application in proximity to watercourses or within floodplain areas?	1	29	1
	Adhere to manure application setbacks for lands sloping towards surface water bodies as outlined in the AOPA.	Does the MDP address manure application setbacks?	0	30	1
	Integrate Low Impact Development (LID) techniques for stormwater management in new development, including permeable pavement, bioswales, rain gardens, natural drainage ways, stormwater retention ponds, rainwater harvesting.	Does the MDP include policies requiring or encouraging LID in new developments?	12	18	1
		If "Yes" then what types of developments are included (Agricultural, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, etc.)?	Not Specified	Not Specified	Not Specified

Discussion - Raise your hand to speak and add your comments in the chat

Challenges/Barriers to Implementation | Opportunities for Alignment | Comments

WORKSHOP

3. Biodiversity – Habitat Conservation (25 mins)

Discussion:

1. Challenges/Barriers to Implementation
2. Opportunities for Better Alignment
3. Additional Comments



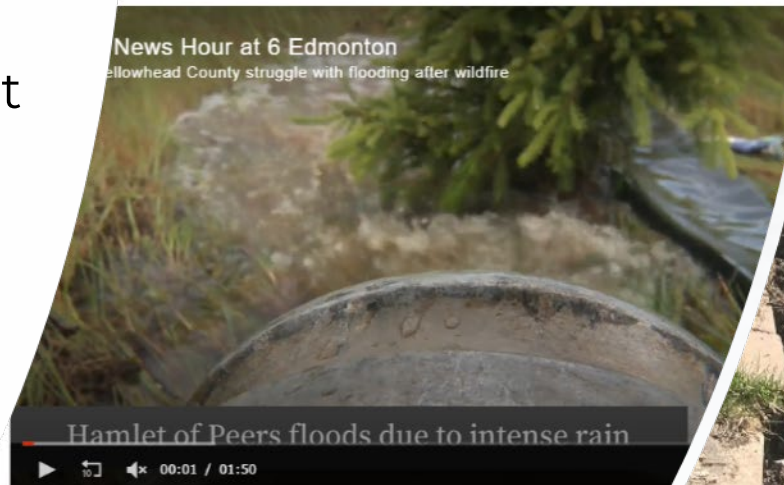
Yellowhead County struggle with flooding Wildfire: 'One extreme to the next'

by Mertz • Global News

June 20, 2023 12:53 pm • Updated June 20, 2023 8:14 pm

News Hour at 6 Edmonton

Yellowhead County struggle with flooding after wildfire



Hamlet of Peers floods due to intense rain

00:01 / 01:50



WORKSHOP

2. Biodiversity - Habitat Conservation & Management, Page 31 (25 mins)

PLAN PRIORITY	MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS	MDP POLICIES	YES	NO	PARTIAL
Habitat conservation and management	Maintain natural habitat corridors.	Does the MDP identify natural habitat corridors within the municipality?	0	31	0
		Does the MDP include policies requiring the protection of natural habitat corridors in development processes?	7	21	3
	Incorporate ESAs in municipal policies related to environmental protection. Integrate local ESAs into development project criteria.	Does the MDP identify provincial ESAs or other locally determined environmentally significant areas?	11	20	0
		Does the MDP incorporate provincial or local ESAs in municipal development processes?	4	27	0
	Introduce policy to create, protect, restore natural assets (identified as natural resources and ecosystems that yield a flow of benefits to people, including forests and healthy tree stands, watercourses, water bodies, wetlands, fields, soil).	Does the MDP include policies to protect environmental assets?	24	4	3
		Does the MDP include policies to restore environmental assets?	3	26	2

Discussion - Raise your hand to speak and add your comments in the chat

Challenges/Barriers to Implementation | Opportunities for Alignment | Comments

ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION GUIDES

Next Step: Implementation Guides

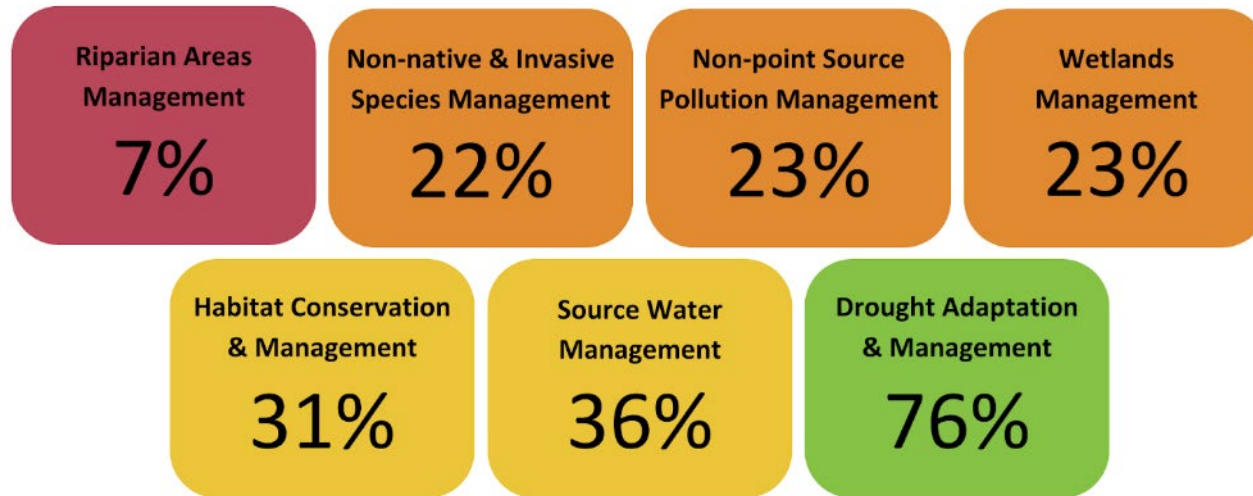
- The project team will prepare implementation guides with sample goal, objective and policy language that can be used by all jurisdictions in the watersheds to assist with updates to land use policy and programs.
- Individualized reports for select communities will also be provided.
- The individualized guides will identify specific areas where policies are already successfully implemented and areas where new policies could be considered.



ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION GUIDES

Focus areas of the Implementation Guides will include:

1. Prepare draft goals, objectives, and policies for Plan Components



1. Identify how existing goals, objectives and policies can be refined to improve implementation, include example language.

ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION GUIDES

3. Identify available resources and mapping data to:
 - establish triggers for when additional studies must be provided in support of plan or LUB amendments, ASP development, subdivision and development applications
 - assist decision makers to identify conservation priorities, areas and conservation targets
 - Assist with monitoring of goals, objectives and targets.
4. Incorporate feedback from workshops into the recommendations



THANK YOU



APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK



June 5, 2024

BY EMAIL to executivedirector@battleriverwatershed.ca

**RE: Camrose County Response on the Draft Discussion Guide
Aligning Land Use & Development Policy with Watershed Management Recommendations**

Camrose County Council has had the opportunity to review the Draft Discussion Guide and would like to thank the BRWA for the work on this project. We understand that reviewing these Municipal Development Plans and the public engagement process you undertook was an extensive task.

Camrose County Council recognizes that the protection of wetlands and other types of water bodies is included in the Provincial Water Act and Alberta Wetland Policy. Agricultural legislation around CFO's and manure spreading is included in the AOPA, enforced by the NRCB. Camrose County's planning documents support the jurisdiction of these legislations.

Camrose County supports the protection of wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas and is pleased to see that the County's planning documents were in alignment with many of the draft recommendations already. While Camrose County documents don't always use the same terminology and detail your report recommends, especially at the Municipal Development Plan level, planning documents as a whole generally align with the principles of watershed management discussed in your guide.

Battle River Watershed Alliance has put forward 26 recommendations and would like all municipalities to incorporate them. Camrose County has reviewed the recommendations and has some concerns that the County believes should be considered.

Definitions:

Camrose County understands through this process that the definition of wetlands, or watercourses is very broad, and often goes beyond what is generally understood as a riparian area or wetland in current planning documents. As the recommendations from BRWA use this expanded definition of wetlands or watercourses, they will be applied more broadly than is historically practiced in Camrose County. Recommendations 16, 17, 19 and 21-26 refer to wetlands and riparian areas which are already addressed in the Camrose County Land Use Bylaw, but we use a different definition for wetlands and riparian areas than is used by Battle River Watershed.

Camrose County Council desires to balance the landowners' rights to use and protect the land with the County's responsibility to protect wetland areas. The focus of applying the recommendations will continue to be done using Camrose County's traditional definitions.

Municipal Development Plans vs. Other Planning Documents:

Camrose County understands that the scope of this study was limited to Municipal Development Plans. Accordingly, the recommendations are geared toward inclusion in Municipal Development Plans. Camrose County feels that a number of the recommendations (2,4,7,10, and 14) are more suited to other planning documents, such as the Land Use Bylaw or Area Structure Plans.



Recommendation #3 – Ensure 10% of municipal lands are designated as protected areas (ER, ERE, CR, CRE)

Specifying 10% of municipal land for designation as a protected area may not be realistic. Environmental Reserve and Conservation Reserve have specific criteria in the MGA, if 10% of the land in a subdivision (which is the only time you can take ER) doesn't comply with the MGA definitions, then the municipality cannot take ER. Conservation Reserves have similar, slightly broader requirements, but the municipality is required to buy the land at market value; this can be onerous on municipalities for the initial costs and the ongoing maintenance and liability costs. In addition, the recommendation is unclear if this is for the overall municipality or on individual projects. Camrose County has around 6% protected areas, not including Conservation Easements and smaller reserve parcels throughout the county already, the majority of the land is in the Miquelon and Driedmeat Lake area. Some work needs to be done around this recommendation in rural working landscapes and to provide additional clarity on how the recommendation should be interpreted.

Outside municipal jurisdiction and capacity

A number of the recommendations (6,9,10,11, and 14) involve areas that are governed by other government agencies (such as the NRCB, or Alberta Environment), or are simply outside the scope of municipalities ability to control, monitor and enforce. To include commitments in the municipalities development plans that are outside of municipal jurisdiction, or to which we cannot adequately complete could be negligent.

Recommendation #24 Establish minimum 30 meter wide naturally vegetated areas adjacent to each side of watercourses to protect riparian area and require increased or additional riparian setbacks to protect or enhance habitat function.

Given that the definition of watercourses includes all wetlands, and that riparian areas, by the definitions provided, are present on all wetlands, not just flowing water, BRWA's recommendation to include a specific guideline such as a 30-meter setback in the County MDP is excessive. Such a criteria would be difficult to identify (wet year vs dry year), difficult to establish (require ER's and wetland assessments), and difficult to enforce (manpower and expertise). There is significant potential for conflicts between agricultural development and livestock grazing. For example, it is generally accepted that farmers will plant crops though wetlands in dry years, and this would be in contravention of a 30-meter-wide area of natural vegetation.

The County's Land Use Bylaws already contain detailed setback information related to wetlands and when it is to be applied. The Land Use Bylaw is the applicable place for detailed setback information in the County's planning documents, not the Municipal Development Plan.

Recommendation #25 Ensure a minimum of 75% of riparian areas are naturally vegetated.

Currently Camrose County has 37% high intactness and 25% moderate intactness for a total of 62%. The recommendation does not specify the level of intactness and natural vegetation that is considered appropriate; does the moderate intactness count? While specifying a target goal is a good suggestion, placing this in the Camrose County MDP may place an unachievable commitment on the County.

As stated above, the County's planning documents, though not necessarily the Municipal Development Plan, do address almost all of the recommendations. While some of the recommendations could be added to the MDP Camrose County just updated the MDP and are unlikely to reopen it in the near future, especially since other planning documents address the key issues. In addition, when it comes to specific



targets and thresholds, such as when to ask for a biophysical assessment, these requirements rarely show up in an MDP and would be more suited to a LUB or planning policy. MDPs establish visions, goals and objectives for a community where the LUB and planning policy create the framework to implement the MDP.

The Battle River Watershed discussion guide does serve as a good reminder that there is room for improvement in planning documents especially around clarification of definitions, clearer triggers for when certain studies are requested, consideration of some groundwater and wetland studies to support planning and conservation work, and finally, that Camrose County should reconsider whether standard setbacks from riparian areas is sufficient, or a model for dynamic setbacks be used based on the individual site characteristics.

We appreciate the BRWA commitment to working with Camrose County and ask that the listed concerns be taken into consideration.

If you have any questions, please contact the planning office at (780)678-3070 or planning@county.camrose.ab.ca.

Sincerely,

Camrose County

Reeve Cindy Trautman
Camrose County

CC: RMA
The member MD's and Counties of the BRWA