



WHEATLAND COUNTY

Where There's Room to Grow

Request for Decision

January 15th, 2020

Resolution No. _____

Date Prepared December 13th, 2019

Subject

Decision-making topic title

Manager of Agriculture and Environment Report

Recommendation

Clear resolution answering – what/who/how/when

Move acceptance of the Manager of Agriculture and Environment Report.

CAO Comments

Any additional comments regarding the reason for the recommendation

RECOMMENDATION

Report/Document:

Attached



Available



None



Key Issue(s) / Concepts Defined

Define the topic, reference background material and state question to be answered

Operations

- 3782 km of roadside mowing completed.
- Approximately 50 km of new road construction and 3 gravel pits mowed.
- 480 acres of spraying for weed control on 824 km of right of way.
- 7 waste transfer sites sprayed
- 193 weed inspections including 4 times each in the Villages of Standard, Rockyford and Hussar.
- 5470 km of roadside inspected
- 26 weed complaints and/or inquires responded too.
- 22.5 km of roadside seeding
- 50 acres of borrow areas seeded
- 60 bales of eco-tack and 61 bales of straw applied for erosion control
- 103 Clubroot surveys
- 14 Canola stem samples sent to Alberta Agriculture for Blackleg and Sclerotinia testing
- 45 Grasshopper surveys completed for AB Agriculture.
- 2 Bertha Armyworm surveys completed for AB Agriculture.
- 4 cattle scale rentals – 4-H
- 12 Magpie, 6 skunk trap, 2 Pasture sprayer, 4 tree sprayer rental,
- 224 plastic grain bags recycled for a total of 51.7 tonne.
- Seed cleaning plant inspections complete with all 3 plants receiving scores of 99%.

Environmental Program

Operational Environmental Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Final Environmental Audit Report provided to Council on January 14, 2020. Achieved 90% success in correcting audit findings with remaining 10% committed to ongoing attention as part of regular programming ○ Applied for and received four Temporary Diversion Licenses for road dust control activities ○ Applied for water license for Dalum Fire Hall water well – expected in early 2020 ○ Response to inquiries from field staff and assistance with legislative requirements
Environmental Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2018 Environmental Update Publication was published in early 2019. Hardcopies were sent to stakeholders and provided to Council, and a digital version was added to our website ○ Environmental Program was modified in early 2019 for clarity and to reflect changing internal process. Program document was published on County website and provided to Council as information, and promoted in County Connector
Environmental Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordinated the attendance of 8 staff members to erosion and sediment control training in April ○ Created a booth for Canada Water Week to share information with residents about water in Wheatland County ○ Shared information about water stewardship with staff at the annual Safety Day ○ Environmental topics shared in County media include: species at risk information, runoff management and water legislation, and dugout regulations
Technical Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assisted with RMA resolution submissions on the topics of compost regulation, waste transfer bin funding, and extended producer responsibility ○ Development of project management tool pilot to incorporate environmental considerations into road projects while avoiding strained timelines – increased support for environmental requirements of road projects ○ Support for erosion control activities at sites damaged by heavy flooding ○ Support for shallow well-digging at Thurn Pit – obtained Class B Well License from Alberta Environment and submitted well report ○ Assistance with the ALUS program and other Agricultural Services projects ○ Ongoing technical support for infrastructure projects as requested (hydrogeological studies, water licensing and approvals, water and soil quality) ○ Ongoing review of planning & development files for comments regarding agricultural and environmental impact, and response to questions from planning & development staff ○ Response to ratepayer inquiries on wide range of topics including but not limited to shelterbelt development, wetland management, dugout development, contamination and pollution, and support/internal advocacy for areas of concern brought forward

Advancing Environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two Environmental Stewardship Awards were handed out at the 2019 Annual General Meeting and Carseland School Park Partnership Announcement. The process was altered for 2019 for timing to align with the ASB Bursary program, and unfortunately no interest was received for the program this year. Advertisement will begin again early in 2020 Development of a shelterbelt and ecobuffer funding program, set to kick off with a workshop that is planned for February of 2020. Policy research and internal advocacy towards development of policy solution for soil being brought in from outside the municipality. After obtaining ASB and Council support, work is now underway in the Planning & Development department towards Land Use Bylaw amendments. Attendance at external environmental-themed events hosted by stakeholders and collaboration with external agencies on environmental topics, including: Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute, Wetland Education Network, ALUS Canada, Bow River Basin Council, Alberta Woodlot Extension Society, Miistakis Institute, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Alberta Environment & Parks
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Agriculture Conservation Program

Event	Date/ Location	Partners	Number of Attendees/ Comments
Landowner consultation (for all programs combined)	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 80 landowners More than 160 interactions (phone, email, in-person)
Crowfoot Creek Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program landowner grant	Ongoing Programs ends March 2020	Western Irrigation District Alberta Environment and Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total grant funding received from AEP \$198,500.00 15 applications received 9 Projects completed 9 Offsite watering systems installed 1,895 m of riparian fence installed Protection of 21,266m riparian lands 2018 the WID fenced 7000m of canals 2019 the WID fenced over 1,250m of canals 8 riparian health assessments -2018 3 riparian health assessments -2019
Rosebud Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program landowner grant	Ongoing	Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) Rocky View County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant approved by Environment Contract waiting on AEP Signature
Alberta Environmental Farm Plan (EFP)	Ongoing	Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Agricultural Research and Extension Council of Alberta (ARECA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 Plans Approved 6 workbooks in progress
Canada Agriculture Partnership	Ongoing	Alberta Agriculture and Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisted 29 landowners with CAP programs
Safe Water Well Action Program (SWWAP)	Ongoing	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 applications received 2 well pits removed 7 wells abandoned <p>\$8863.22 expended</p>

Wheatland Agricultural Stewardship Program	Ongoing	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 2 applications received · 1 project completed · \$5000 expended
Wheatland ALUS	Ongoing	ALUS Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 2 Partnership Advisory Committee Meetings · 4 approved projects, 107.81 acres · \$16,626.25 · Wheatland County project prioritization map (AB AG) · 2 landowner workshops · ALUS banner purchased · Attended national conference
County Connector Newsletter	Ongoing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 24 submissions
Alberta Invasive Species Guide	Ongoing	Association of Agricultural Fieldman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Re-Print: 10,000 copies
Red-Bow Agricultural Partnership	Ongoing	Clearwater, Mountain View, Red Deer, Kneehill, Rocky View & MD Bighorn Alberta Agriculture Cows and Fish Grey Wooded Forage Association Foothills Forage and Grazing Association Olds College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Chair of RAP Committee · 2 events hosted · 4 meetings ·
Ladies Livestock Lessons	January 28th Airdrie	Red-Bow Agricultural Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 76 attended
Ranching Opportunities Conference	February 9th Olds College	Red-Bow Agricultural Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 160 attended
Wheatland Water Day	March 22-Admin Office	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 33 attended
Solar and Agriculture Workshop	Acme Community Hall May 15th	Mountain View County Kneehill County Rocky View County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 18 attended
Fencing and Grazing 101	June 26 th Wheatland County	Foothills Forage and Grazing Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Cancelled due to low registration
Get the Dirt on Soil Health Workshop	October 16th Irricana	Foothills Forage and Grazing Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 20 attended
Winter Feed and Water Workshop	November 13th Carseland Community Hall	Foothills Forage and Grazing Association, Vulcan County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 26 attended



Wheatland Water Day



Ranching Opportunities Conference



Winter Feed and Water workshop

Year End Weed Report for 2019

Activities

- Received 26 complaints/inquiries from Ratepayers
- Completed 25 AIMS weed cases/updates
- Surveyed all Provincial/County roads at least 2 times
- Followed up with 2018 weed cases
- Controlled weeds at Wheatland County infrastructure sites such as: County transfer sites, cemeteries, satellite shops, fire halls, borrows, Thurn, sewage lagoons, etc.
- Set up and administer bait station program. 12 new bait stations purchased and utilized for a grand total of 37 in use until mid-July
- Surveyed the Bow River for Purple loosestrife, 6 locations identified and controlled
- Participated in AB Parks weed control event at Johnsons Island Provincial Park
- Purple loosestrife control in collaboration with WID and DU
- Continue to work with the CAGWC as Chair
- Surveyed Villages of Rockyford, Hussar, and Standard 4 times each, Wheatland County villages -such as Rosebud, Lyalta, Speargrass and Carseland
- Controlled Hoary cress on Hwy 1 for Ab transportation
- Continue seed sample checks and inspections at seed plants
- Continue dealing with rail lines, spray checks/inspections
- Followed up on old Flowering Rush sites, 9 locations

Inspections

- 18 ratepayer inquiries/complaints about weeds= 18 inspections
- 193 Inspections

*Wheatland County roads inspected =2735
kms (2 times) =5470km

Alberta Transportation Agreement

As part of Wheatland County's commitment to control weeds, an agreement has been made with Alberta Transportation and their contractors for Wheatland County staff to control small patches of regulated weed infestations located on Provincial Highway right of ways. Large scale weed infestation locations will continue to be forwarded to Alberta Transportation to take care of on their own. This programming follows the principals of Early Detection and Rapid Response to protect Wheatland County Ratepayers from new infestations establishing on their lands or adjacent to. . Primary species of concern include Hoary cress and Leafy spurge as their populations remain scattered but low along the transportation corridors.

Prohibited Noxious Weeds and Locations

Spotted Knapweed - Johnsons Island Provincial Park – Past weir along dirt trail (50.827874° -113.444936°). Hand-picked in 2019, 3 times.

Flowering rush - 9 locations in WID canal system,



Plumeless thistle

Locations along the Bow River's shores From Mckinnon Flats downstream to Hwy 24 Bridge and is prolific. Johnsons Island and Legacy Island have been controlled in the 2019 season.

Orange hawkweed

Site identified in Carseland (410 McKinnon Dr.) was checked multiple times throughout the year and no re-growth was detected.

Purple loosestrife

Various locations along Bow River shores up and

downstream of Legacy Island as well as a Ducks Unlimited pond located at: NE-15-24-26-4.

Village Inspections

As all local authorities in Alberta are delegated responsibility for controlling weeds within their boundaries by the Province of Alberta through the Weed Control Act. Wheatland County Agricultural Service Board has reached agreement with urban partners within the jurisdiction of Wheatland County to provide Weed Inspection Services. The basic approach is public awareness, education, and participation in conjunction with integrated pest management. For the 2019 year the Villages of Rockyford, Standard and Hussar continue partnering in to the Inter-Local Municipal Agreement for weed inspection services. Since most Villages are relatively small in size surveying one does not take a lot of time. A total of 4 tours each were billed between these villages. There were generally no outstanding issues but below are some examples of the little infestations that were identified and controlled:

- Ox-eye daisies in Hussar on undeveloped lot- hand pulled, Black henbane in an alley – cut and bagged
- Creeping Bellflower in Standard- hand pulled
- Policeman's helmet in an alley- spoke with resident and was controlled, Downy brome in Race track in Rockyford and under bleachers which the Rockyford municipal staff sprayed

Multiple inspections are carried out throughout the growing season in each Village. The reason for more than one inspection is that the plants listed on the Weed Control Act and Regulations are better identified when they are mature and flowering. All residences, roads/alleys, and commercial/public properties were checked. The limiting factor for conducting reconnaissance is usually high fences, buildings and trees blocking a complete view of the properties in question. While this makes it more difficult to see, efforts were taken to make sure all properties were inspected.

Submitted by: Russel Muenchrath
Manager of Agriculture and Environment

Reviewed by: Mike Ziehr
General Manager of Transportation and Agriculture

Agucation

2020 Learning Opportunities *for Wheatland Landowners*

Ladies Livestock Lessons

January 18th

8:30 - 4:30, The Heritage Centre, Cremona
\$50 registration fee (includes lunch, coffee, & snacks)
Register at www.redbowag.com

Ranching Opportunities Conference

February 13th

8:30 to 4:30, Olds College, Alumni Centre
\$50 registration fee (includes lunch, coffee & tradeshow)
Register at www.redbowag.com

Jim Gerrish Grazing Workshop

February 14th, 2020

9:00-3:30, Wheatland County Administration Building
Spend a full day learning from world renowned grazer Jim Gerrish.
<https://jimgerrishwheatland2020.eventbrite.ca>

Shelterbelt & Ecobuffer Workshop

February 22nd

1:00pm - 4:30pm Wheatland County Administration Building
Learn more about planting, care and design
For more information contact Gay Mowat at Ph: 403-934-3321 or
Gay.Mowat@wheatlandcounty.ca

Farmer Pesticide Certificate

February 27th

8:30am - 5:00pm Wheatland County Administration Building
For more information contact Gay Mowat or Russel Muenchrath at
Ph: 403-934-3321 or Russel.Muenchrath@wheatlandcounty.ca

Working Well Workshop

March 17th

6:30pm - 9:00pm Wheatland County Administration Building
For more information contact Sarah Schumacher at
Ph: 403-361-2027 or Sarah.Schumacher@wheatlandcounty.ca

If You Cant Beat it, Eat It

January 9th, 2020

Fort MacLeod Community Hall

Pesky weeds? Let nature work for you by using livestock grazing to control invasive weed species & guardian dogs to protect your livestock.

Cost:

\$30.00 + GST for FFGA Members

\$40.00 + GST for Non-Members

Register at:

grazingweeds.eventbrite.ca

Agronomy Update 2020

Jan 7th - 8th, 2020

Red Deer, AB

Place: Cambridge Hotel
(Formerly Sheraton)

\$170.00

Registration includes lunches
and coffee breaks

Register on the Alberta Agriculture website or call :
1-800-387-6030

Agronomy Update features the latest information for grain producers, crop advisors and industry partners. Topics range from disease, insect, weed and soil management to smart farms, biosecurity, crop rotations and crop agronomy.