



POLICY 2.14 MAINTAINING BIODIVERSITY

Department: Agricultural Service Department

Date Approved: September 27, 2016

Rescinds: N/A

Council Res. No: 708/09/27/16

PURPOSE:

To support the enhancement of the environmental integrity on all lands in Northern Sunrise County by developing and implementing programs that are flexible and promote environmental conservation, enhancement and restoration.

SCOPE:

Northern Sunrise County views all lands with high biodiversity and environmental sensitivity as an important asset to the community and the eco-system within the County. There are numerous environmental, social and economic benefits associated with maintaining, restoring and enhancing the ecological integrity of lands held in private ownership. Northern Sunrise County acknowledges that in many cases, economic costs associated with conserving, enhancing and restoring environmental assets are borne by private landowners, but these efforts provide benefits to the biosphere and society as a whole.

DEFINITIONS:

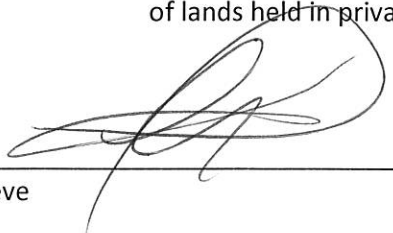
1. "Biodiversity" means the biological diversity, or variety, of all plants, animals and other living microorganisms interacting in all types of environments found on the planet. The Canadian Biodiversity Strategy defines Biological Diversity, often referred to as "biodiversity", to the variety of species and ecosystems on Earth and the ecological processes of which they are a part. Three components of biodiversity are ecosystem, species and genetic diversity. Ecosystems perform functions that are essential to human existence such as oxygen and soil production and water purification.
2. "Enhancement" means a process that promotes the natural condition of a site through the preservation, restoration, or enhancement of all of the following applicable aspects: the site's native vegetation, the site's natural hydrology, the area's natural topography, the site's biodiversity, and its ability to act as a wildlife habitat.
3. "Ecological Goods and Services" means the benefits arising from the ecological functions of healthy ecosystems. Examples of ecological goods include clean air and abundant fresh water. Ecological services include purification of air and water, maintenance of biodiversity, decomposition of wastes, soil, vegetation generation and renewal, and pollination of crops and natural vegetation, groundwater recharge through wetlands, seed dispersal, greenhouse gas mitigation, and aesthetically pleasing landscapes. Ecosystem services are the suite of benefits that ecosystems provide to humanity; namely: (a) provisioning services which involve the production of renewable resources, e.g. food, fresh water, wood, etc., (b) regulating services

which are those that lessen environmental changes, e.g. climate regulation, pest/disease control, etc., and (c) cultural services represent human value and enjoyment, e.g. landscape aesthetics, cultural heritage, outdoor recreation, etc.

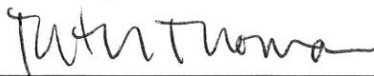
4. "Privately Held Lands" means any lands not owned, leased, or managed by Northern Sunrise County or other levels of government, and which fall within Northern Sunrise County boundaries.

POLICY:

1. The Agricultural Services Department is responsible for overseeing the development, implementation, and monitoring of this policy with the Watershed Advisory Committee providing input and feedback.
2. The Agricultural Services Department is responsible for implementing this policy with interested private landowners in partnership with other levels of government, societies and other non-governmental agencies.
3. Enhancement, restoration and maintenance programs on privately held lands will be promoted and supported using three broad strategies:
 - a. Education and Awareness: Education and awareness programs will be designed and delivered to foster awareness and change towards environmental stewardship in Northern Sunrise County. The programs will include the environmental, social and economic benefits associated with maintaining, restoring and enhancing the ecological integrity of lands held in private ownership.
 - b. Incentive and Voluntary Programs: Incentive and voluntary programs will be developed and employed by Northern Sunrise County, and in partnership with other levels of government, societies and other non-governmental agencies to encourage landowners to voluntarily undertake activities that benefit the environment, and promote ecological goods and services on their properties. An example of an incentive and voluntary program is the Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) Program.
 - c. Voluntary Agreements: Northern Sunrise County will assist and encourage organizations such as land trust societies, and conservation organizations to work with private landowners to enter into Voluntary Agreements that preserve and retain natural landscapes and environmentally sensitive features within landscapes. These landscapes and environmental sensitive features will be the base for the County's Future Environmental Conservation Master Plan. Northern Sunrise County may enter into Voluntary Agreements in the form of Conservation Easements, or similar mechanisms in order to maintain, and enhance the ecological integrity and biodiversity of lands held in private ownership.



Reeve



Chief Administrative Officer