



WHEATLAND COUNTY

Where There's Room to Grow



Wheatland County Environmental Program



Wheatland County Environmental Program

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1 Mission	3
1.2 Vision	3
1.3 Objectives.....	3
2. Program Structure	4
2.1 Annual Program Timeline	4
2.2 Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
3. Program Focus Areas	6
3.1 Operational Environmental Compliance.....	6
3.2 Environmental Communications	6
3.3 Environmental Education	7
3.4 Technical Support	7
3.5 Advancing Environmental Sustainability.....	8
4. Policy Context	9
4.1 External Environmental Requirements.....	9
4.2 Wheatland County Policy Context	9



1. Introduction

Wheatland County administration is dedicated to implementing an Environmental Program that aligns with the commitments made in Wheatland County's Environmental Policy. This document describes the structure, intent, and priorities of the program.

1.1 Mission

To provide environmentally responsible services in Wheatland County.

1.2 Vision

Wheatland County will be a leader in environmental accountability.

1.3 Objectives

- i. To establish and maintain support and resources for an Environmental Program.
- ii. To effectively communicate environmental achievements and initiatives to internal staff and the external Wheatland County community.
- iii. To identify the environmental priorities of Wheatland County and allocate resources accordingly.
- iv. To write and implement an environmental policy for Wheatland County municipal operations.
- v. To establish and implement an Environmental Program that can be integrated into Wheatland County operations, and continually evaluated and improved to meet environmental goals.



2. Program Structure

The Environmental Steering Committee (the “committee”) will advise the direction of the Environmental Program. This committee will meet twice per year to review activity reports and ensure the program direction is aligned with the priorities of the municipality. This Environmental Program document may be amended annually at the discretion of the committee and provided to council as information. The environmental coordinator will be responsible for preparing reports and information for the committee and council, and carrying out work under the Environmental Program.

2.1 Annual Program Timeline

- First Half: January - June
 - *Staff Consultation:* The environmental coordinator will meet with identified key staff members in the first half of the year to determine needs, issues, projects of interest, and areas for support.
 - *May/June Meeting:* The committee will meet to review the activity report from the first half of the year, discuss the summary of staff consultations, discuss council’s direction and budget, and discuss any opportunities or issues that have arisen.
 - *Council Reports:* Updates will be included in the monthly department reports and an annual summary provided to council from the previous year.

- Second Half: July - December
 - *Staff Consultation:* The environmental coordinator will meet with identified key staff members in the second half of the year to determine needs, issues, projects of interest, and areas for support.
 - *November/December Meeting:* The committee will meet to review the activity report from the second half of the year, discuss the summary of staff consultations, review the Environmental Program for updates, discuss council’s direction and budget, review and provide input on the annual summary content, and discuss opportunities and issues that have arisen.
 - *Council Reports:* Updates will be included in the monthly department reports.

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

- Environmental Steering Committee:
 - *Purpose:* The committee is responsible for advising the direction of the Environmental Program and ensuring that it aligns with the commitments made in Wheatland County's Environmental Policy. They will adhere to the mission, vision, and objectives outlined in this document.
 - *Meetings:* Two annual meetings will be held to discuss topics outlined in 2.1 - annual program timeline. Meeting summaries will be written by the administrative assistant of the agriculture and environment department. The environmental coordinator will be the chairperson for meetings.
 - *Membership:* To fulfill the intent of the committee, membership targets senior management and council representatives. Membership is ultimately determined by the CAO.
 - *Decision-Making:* Committee meetings are informal and are based on consensus amongst members.
- Environmental Coordinator:
 - *Reporting:* Coordinator activity will be included in the monthly department reports to council, and in the annual report which will describe county-wide environmental achievements throughout the year. Activity updates will also be provided at each committee meeting.
 - *Meeting Chair:* The environmental coordinator will set meeting dates and times, prepare agendas, and act as chair for the committee meetings.
 - *Program Activities:* The environmental coordinator is responsible for carrying out activities aligned with the program's focus areas, as described in section three. Specific activities are determined in consultation with the manager of agriculture and environment, and the general manager of transportation and agriculture.
 - *Staff Consultation:* The Coordinator will meet with key staff members twice per year to build and maintain beneficial working relationships and discuss needs, issues, projects of interest, and areas for support.



3. Program Focus Areas

The list below describes focus areas for the Environmental Program that provide direction for administrative activity. These focus areas are determined by the committee to address Wheatland County's Environmental Policy (general policy 3.25) and related strategic direction, with a goal to continually improve county operations and promote environmental stewardship. Activities specifically undertaken to address these areas will be determined by the agriculture and environment department. Activities undertaken in other departments that align with these focus areas will be supported where appropriate and promoted in the annual summary.

3.1 Operational Environmental Compliance

Strategy:

Ensure that all aspects of county operations comply with, and exceed where possible, applicable environmental legislation.

Actions:

- Correct findings of the 2018 environmental audit.
- Ongoing attention to aspects of our operations that require some form of compliance with an act, regulation, code of practice, etc., with a goal to proactively identify risks and manage activities.
- Continual identification of risk areas and opportunities for improvement.
- Relationship-building with key staff involved in operational activities requiring compliance; with a goal to provide effective support to all operations.
- Work towards a proactive internal environmental management system to reduce the need to rely on environmental audits in the future.
- Build knowledge of environmental legislation throughout the municipality through use of effective communications and relevant educational opportunities.

3.2 Environmental Communications

Strategy:

Incorporate environmental communications into general Wheatland County communications to raise awareness, in the organization and community, about environmental initiatives and current issues, topics, and events. As well as to promote achievements and programs with a goal to demonstrate Wheatland County's leadership in environmental initiatives.

Actions:

- Continual improvement of the county's website environmental sections.
- Annual Environmental Program update publication.
- Contributions to local media about program, activities, and relevant topics.
- Consistent reporting to council and the agricultural service board.

- Development and use of communications materials.
- Connecting residents and staff with relevant external information.
- Community consultation, where appropriate, to determine environmental interests and needs of the community and organization.
- Efforts to extend information to the community and stakeholders could include, but are not limited to: articles in the county connector, open house events, attendance at local events, community presentations, information on the website, social media posts, etc.



3.3 Environmental Education

Strategy:

Educate staff, council, and the public on matters of local and regional environmental importance to increase community knowledge of relevant environmental topics and issues.

Actions:

- Coordinate extension opportunities which could include, but are not limited to: staff and public workshops, open houses, internal lunch n' learns, informational documents and publications, courses, newsletter information, etc.
- Collaborate with external organizations to bring educational opportunities to Wheatland County.
- Remain aware of interests and needs of staff and public, and continually modify topics and approaches to suit.

3.4 Technical Support

Strategy:

Provide a source of local or internal information and support for the staff and public on matters related to the environment.

Actions:

- Respond to inquiries from staff and the public on matters related to the environment with the most reasonably accurate information.
- Provide contacts for appropriate external agencies, if necessary, to better answer questions or resolve issues.

- Policy analysis and advocacy support for senior administration and council on matters of environmental legislation or current events/issues affecting the municipality and its residents.
- Recurrent communications and consultation with key staff members to maintain relationships and determine needs, issues, projects of interest, and areas for support.

3.5 Advancing Environmental Sustainability

Strategy:

Support, maintain, improve and coordinate programs, activities, and partnerships that act to advance environmental sustainability locally or regionally and benefit Wheatland County and its residents.

Actions:

- Explore opportunities for additional programming of benefit to Wheatland County and the environment.
- Maintain existing partnerships with external stewardship groups, contribute to initiatives where possible, and seek opportunities to further contribute and partner with external organizations to achieve mutual goals.
- Pursue internal stewardship projects to reduce the impact of Wheatland County operations and engage staff.
- Examples of existing county programs to maintain, monitor and continually improve include:
 - Water Rebate Program
 - Environmental Stewardship Award Program
 - Crowfoot and Rosebud Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Programs
 - Agricultural Conservation Extension Programs
 - Safe Water Wells Action Program
 - ALUS and the Wheatland Agricultural Stewardship Program
 - Agricultural Plastics Recycling Program
 - Waste Transfer Site Recycling Programs



4. Policy Context

4.1 External Environmental Requirements

Wheatland County, as an organization, is subject to the federal and provincial environmental requirements that apply to its operation. These requirements include, but are not limited to, the most current versions of the following, or similar, and their associated applicable regulations:

- Agricultural Operations Practices Act (Provincial)
- Environmental Protection Act (Federal)
- Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (Provincial)
- Fisheries Act (Federal)
- Land Stewardship Act (Provincial)
- Migratory Birds Convention Act (Federal)
- Municipal Government Act (Provincial)
- Navigation Act (Federal)
- Public Lands Act (Provincial)
- Soil Conservation Act (Provincial)
- Species at Risk Act (Federal)
- Water Act (Provincial)
- Weed Control Act (Provincial)
- Wetland Policy (Provincial)
- Wildlife Act (Provincial)

4.2 Wheatland County Policy Context

This Environmental Program was developed to correspond with Wheatland County's Strategic Plans and to meet the commitments made in the environmental policy (general policy 3.25).



WHEATLAND COUNTY

Where There's Room to Grow



Contact Information

Any questions about the content of this document can be directed to the Wheatland County Agriculture and Environment department.

**Please call reception to be directed accordingly:
403-934-3321**