

Southern Foothills Community Stewardship Initiative

Results from the First Round of Community Forums Held January 24-27, 2011

Priorities from Table Groups – DRAFT 1
Combined results: Turner Valley, High River, Nanton, Cowley

Forum dialogue questions

Question 1:

- a. What is important to you about the landscape and watersheds of the Southern Foothills.
- b. What are the main issues that impact those values?

Question 2:

Based on your discussions of important values ...

What are your group's top three priorities for maintaining the ecological health and integrity of this landscape?

Notes re: comments

1. Comments are grouped by code category. Comments and code categories are not listed in order of importance.
2. Some comments were assigned multiple codes, so appear in more than one code category.
3. Comments are recorded verbatim from the yellow sticky notes.

EV & EV - Environmental Values & Ecological Values

- Grass: Keep it for feed for animals especially in winter. It's irreplaceable.
- Water: Amount and Quality. Surface and Ground
- Sustainable agriculture: Economic and ecological
- Accept limits to growth
- Define environmental thresholds and apply to resource extraction, wind turbines, residential development, recreational uses, human population, roads

- Land use decision and plans that avoid fragmentation and ecosystem degradation.
- Reduce emphasis on industrial development.
- Development on landscape has to consider social, environmental and economics by all stakeholders affected. This includes industrial development and acreages.
- Maintain the health and function of the landscape. By doing this we will be able to remain on the landscape.
- Consider cumulative effects. Don't dip into the Natural Capital.
- Healthy landscape; we value the native fescue, the quality and quantity of water.
- Water supported by dominant land use.
- Stewardship Leadership in governance to maintain ecological integrity both local and provincial.
- Determine thresholds to the landscape. Need these limits.
- Respect and stewardship for this iconic landscape and unique geography of region through common interest and sense of community. Protection of water quality and quantity
- Maintaining functionality and capacity of ecosystem.
- Fragmentation: promote agricultural continuity.
- Protection of water quality and quantity
- Carrying Capacity of people, wildlife, recreation, acreages. There is a limit.
- Fragmentation: reducing fragmentation is managing surface disturbances within acceptable limits
- Maintain a functional, ecologically intact landscape realizing the landscape is finite
- Maintain the watershed: water quality and quantity. Area is the watershed for all the prairie provinces
- Do we have to charge for water? If we don't have water we've got nothing. Population growth and industrial increase is drawing more and more. How and where are we going to get enough? How do we maintain what we have?
- Fragmentation: loss of ranch units to subdivision results in water quality losses. Also from population.
- Recognition and documentation of "social and ecological carrying capacity". Land is finite and limits on use are necessary
- Water Quality: Over use from recreation. Regulate industry from pollution. Keep ownership of water in Alberta
- Water: Quality (Ag. chemicals, oil and gas) Conservation, Oversight by whom?
- All stakeholders (agriculture, oil and gas, recreational, aboriginal) need to share in maintaining the landscape and diversity. This could be financial, it could be responsible use tendencies, and everyone needs to become a steward of the land.
- Maintain or improve the natural watershed connectivity and open spaces (emotional value). Fishery valuable index of watershed integrity. We have a unique landscape on a world-wide scale.
- Manage the area to prioritize protection of the watershed
- Ensure water quality and quantity for all downstream and upstream users
- Protect headwater health

- Managing balance
- Protection and conservation of water quality and quantity
- Water: water closest to the source is the most fragile and in need of preservation
- Restoration and preservation of watershed systems
- Sustainable use and respect for land. Eg. Selective logging, no fragmentation
- Protection of nature, wildlife, landscape and scenery, of eastern slopes
- Watershed protection: Every decision should increase water quality and quantity
- Maintain ecological integrity and wildlife connectivity; value ecological goods and services
- Plan must protect the landscape and watershed
- Manage all users with goal of maintaining integrity of the whole system
- Manage resource extraction to protect water, wildlife habitat etc.
- Retain area

LA - Landscape Aesthetics

- Beauty of the land; we value the scenic quality of the land and lack of large scale human footprint.
- Landscape: Beauty, clean air, tranquility, space and freedom
- Protection of nature, wildlife, landscape and scenery, of eastern slopes

TW - Traditional Ways

- Help ranches remain intact.
- Lifestyle; we value the cultural historical ranching lifestyle, and the local landowners who are stewards of the land.
- Maintain sustainable uses and viability of ranching family operation.
- Sustaining a Ranching Economy: Reward stewardship that sustains the ecological integrity
- Protect agricultural lands from further fragmentation for productivity. Water is part of this productivity.

EL - Economic Livelihood

- Help ranches remain intact.
- Fragmentation: promote agricultural continuity.
- Development on landscape has to consider social, environmental and economics by all stakeholders affected. This includes industrial development and acreages.
- Promote the ability to make a livelihood from the land through the good stewardship of water, vegetation, wildlife and livestock thus providing ecological service. Need to place economic value on this.
- Sustaining a Ranching Economy: Reward stewardship that sustains the ecological integrity
- Protect agricultural lands from further fragmentation for productivity. Water is part of this productivity.

- Promote sustainable agriculture operations by using other financial incentives instead of off-farm income. Healthy agriculture economies allow farmers and ranchers to resist subdivision.
- Maintain sustainable uses and viability of ranching family operation.
- Lifestyle; we value the cultural historical ranching lifestyle, and the local landowners who are stewards of the land.

RM – Resource Management

- Responsible and effective rangeland and forest management.
- Manage and enforce biodiversity. Development decisions need to value what is valuable: water, soil, air
- Manage all users with goal of maintaining integrity of the whole system
- Manage resource extraction to protect water, wildlife habitat etc.
- Inventory and manage water quantity; preserve clean water; tie water consumption to water availability
- Dam

SP - Strategic Planning (better planning)

- Define environmental thresholds and apply to resource extraction, wind turbines, residential development, recreational uses, human population, roads
- Determine thresholds to the landscape. Need these limits.
- Responsible Multiple Use Policies need to be implemented. Multiple use can't disappear but it can't be maintained the way it is going
- Balanced collective vision acceptable to all: collaborative, bottom up, adaptable to meet changing circumstances
- Need for a consultation based decision framework including input from all stakeholders (communities, agriculture, oil and gas, recreational, aboriginal)
- Land Use Framework: Grassroots, citizen driven. Honest and respectful communication, include ranchers, agriculture, real estate, recreational
- Have a plan
- Create a vision for the future and work backward in order to set priorities for short and long term planned / managed development for integrated ecological integrity and economic sustainability
 - Plan more accurately the uses while forecasting the demand.
- Planning for the best use needs coordination and cooperation between public and landowner sectors with a vision of having a balance of flexibility to change. Our actions need to move us toward this first vision.
- Need a plan that is based on science.

- Utilize “The Natural Step” back casting process because we believe there are inconsistent / conflicting initiatives / plans / policies
- Plan must protect the landscape and watershed
- Management of the plan: Series of community meetings – expand
- Proactive vision formulated by all interested parties
- Lack of planning and lack of setting priorities has resulted in reactive vs. Proactive development
- Urbanization of rural communities with a perception of no vision or foresight for long term of the area. Need a long term visioning process by all stakeholders.
- Governance model / structure that will ensure protection of the environment and watershed with an effective land use plan (i.e. National Parks structure)
- Coordinated effort of land use to achieve balance for the environment. i.e. Oil and gas development, recreational use, agriculture all competing with different needs.
- Manage all users with goal of maintaining integrity of the whole system
- Manage resource extraction to protect water, wildlife habitat etc.
- Set thresholds, indicators for all land uses; determine what land is capable of sustaining; manage to achieve targets and indicators
- Establish the Dominant Land Use which is the protection of the Ecological Cycle from any other uses (e.g. Industry, housing) until we have the science in place.

MP – Meaningful Participation

- Local decision making.
- Balanced collective vision acceptable to all: collaborative, bottom up, adaptable to meet changing circumstances
- Need for a consultation based decision framework including input from all stakeholders (communities, agriculture, oil and gas, recreational, aboriginal)
- Land Use Framework: Grassroots, citizen driven. Honest and respectful communication, include ranchers, agriculture, real estate, recreational
- Social networking: Local council take responsibility
- Create a mechanism to gather more voices as part of this process and honour those who come out on a warm January evening because we think there are many who won’t / can’t travel and they have opinions
- Develop plan by getting all stakeholders to the table.
- Management of the plan: Series of community meetings – expand
- Proactive vision formulated by all interested parties
- Urbanization of rural communities with a perception of no vision or foresight for long term of the area. Need a long term visioning process by all stakeholders.

DG – Dissatisfaction with Government

- Governance: approval process driven by more than economics.

- Stewardship Leadership in governance to maintain ecological integrity both local and provincial.
- Responsible Multiple Use Policies need to be implemented. Multiple use can't disappear but it can't be maintained the way it is going
- Leadership that is cross sector with authority and responsible to deliver on plan: top down, cooperative, accountable, coordinated
- Need a land-use plan and process that is accountable and enforced
- Develop policies that have some teeth and enforce them. This requires political will and courage both from voters and politicians because we believe that with policies that are inconsistent, we are not getting optimal value as most regulations can't be enforced.
- Confidence in Government - without this, any of our priorities are moot.
- Governance model ...Tends to interrupt and destroy the loyalty people feel towards stewardship of their land

LG – Local Governance

- Local decision making.
- Leadership that is cross sector with authority and responsible to deliver on plan: top down, cooperative, accountable, coordinated
- Social networking: Local council take responsibility
- Self governance

RE - Regulation and Enforcement

- Stewardship Leadership in governance to maintain ecological integrity both local and provincial.
- Determine thresholds to the landscape. Need these limits.
- Access Management: As limited as possible, as long as possible
- Control of our recreational areas. Protection from ATVs and the damage they cause.
- Need a land-use plan and process that is accountable and enforced
- Develop policies that have some teeth and enforce them. This requires political will and courage both from voters and politicians because we believe that with policies that are inconsistent, we are not getting optimal value as most regulations can't be enforced.
- Regulate the issues
- Manage and enforce biodiversity. Development decisions need to value what is valuable: water, soil, air
- Governance model / structure that will ensure protection of the environment and watershed with an effective land use plan (ie. National Parks structure)
- Set thresholds, indicators for all land uses; determine what land is capable of sustaining; manage to achieve targets and indicators

ED – (Impacts of) Economic Development

- Sustainable energy development and diverse energy development. This would be less destructive to the environment and doesn't destroy water (overuse and poisoning.)
- Urbanization of rural communities with a perception of no vision or foresight for long term of the area. Need a long term visioning process by all stakeholders.
- Regulation: controlled logging, oil and gas, recreation, manage weed encroachment
- Fragmentation:
 - industrial infringement
 - Subdivisions – support for smaller separate developments as opposed to cluster developments

PE - Public Education

- Conservation education.
- Water: Educate people to understand water issues. Maybe start at school
- Foster landowner stewardship on private and public land. Need an attitude shift, education and awareness.
- Education about the importance of fescues grasslands and water. We all are users of water, we have personal connection. Need to understand interdependency, including urban centres. All of us have a role in maintaining biodiversity.
- Need education about the land (watershed, foodshed, viewshed, biodiversity) creating and emotional connection to the land.
- Education and engagement: youth, large urban centre, forums, rural communities
- Values: We need a shift in values. We've lost sight as to what is important. We are too profit driven. We've lost our connection to the land. We need to re-educate our youth or they will suffer from Nature Deficit Disorder.
- Educate
- No understanding of ramifications to the watershed by some industries in the area. Users need to have an understanding of the watershed.

SS - Shared Stewardship

- Respect and stewardship for this iconic landscape and unique geography of region through common interest and sense of community.
- Education about the importance of fescues grasslands and water. We all are users of water, we have personal connection. Need to understand interdependency, including urban centres. All of us have a role in maintaining biodiversity.
- Responsible Multiple Use Policies need to be implemented. Multiple use can't disappear but it can't be maintained the way it is going

- All stakeholders (agriculture, oil and gas, recreational, aboriginal) need to share in maintaining the landscape and diversity. This could be financial, it could be responsible use tendencies, and everyone needs to become a steward of the land.
- Better environmental stewards (farmers and ranchers) need to have a value placed on what they are doing

LK - Local Knowledge

- Respect for people who live here.
- Responsible and educated stewardship of the land based on knowledge already gathered by those who have a history and personal relationship with the land.

GEI & ES – Green Economic Incentives and Economic Subsidies

- Foster landowner stewardship on private and public land. Need an attitude shift, education and awareness.
- Enable stewardship through incentives.
- Promote the ability to make a livelihood from the land through the good stewardship of water, vegetation, wildlife and livestock thus providing ecological service. Need to place economic value on this.
- Sustaining a Ranching Economy: Reward stewardship that sustains the ecological integrity
- Rewards for Ecological Responsibility
- Development Rights: This may mean financial rewards for responsible stewards so they don't need to sub-divide.
- Incentives: We need incentives for good land use choices and land stewardship. Government needs to renew its commitment to agriculture industry.
- Watershed provides ecological services (water supply, water quality, biodiversity, and land for food, aesthetic and inspirational. This need to be identified protected and methods need to be found to create incentives to assure the sustainability of these services.
- Sustainability: Ecological Goods and Services have to be Profitable for the Stewards of the Land.
- Sustainable energy development and diverse energy development. This would be less destructive to the environment and doesn't destroy water (overuse and poisoning.)
- Better environmental stewards (farmers and ranchers) need to have a value placed on what they are doing
- Promote sustainable agriculture operations by using other financial incentives instead of off-farm income. Healthy agriculture economies allow farmers and ranchers to resist subdivision.
- Continue to protect the headwaters and areas that are sensitive by providing compensation to the landowners who have been unrecognized for their stewardship. Eg. Pay the landowners to steward the land and use the tools of ALSA (our off-farm income.)

EE - Ecological Economics

- How do we maintain viable communities of people already there? True \$ value including quality of life. Need a \$value established for headwaters of all streams for society to put value on it.
- Economics: need to develop economic measures that include ecological goods and services in estimates of economic value of land → Ecological accounting. This is a first step to reconsidering how we define GDP.

Ecological Goods and Services:

- Manage and enforce biodiversity. Development decisions need to value what is valuable: water, soil, air
- Need for: Ecological goods and services placed on the land so they know how much to pay for any application
- Watershed provides ecological services (water supply, water quality, biodiversity, and land for food, aesthetic and inspirational. This need to be identified protected and methods need to be found to create incentives to assure the sustainability of these services.
- Sustainability: Ecological Goods and Services have to be Profitable for the Stewards of the Land.

RV & RI – Recreation Values and Recreation Impacts

- Water Quality: Over use from recreation. Regulate industry from pollution. Keep ownership of water in Alberta
- Control of our recreational areas. Protection from ATVs and the damage they cause.

MI – More Information Required

- Surface and groundwater monitoring and mapping needs to be a major undertaking to evaluate quantity and quality.
- Need a plan that is based on science.
- No understanding of ramifications to the watershed by some industries in the area. Users need to have an understanding of the watershed.
- Ground water studies are needed to determine what is there and what is needed prior to development. We mean RELIABLE studies.
- Need for: Ground water mapping; Geology; Ecological goods and services placed on the land so they know how much to pay for any application
- Inventory and manage water quantity; preserve clean water; tie water consumption to water availability

- Set thresholds, indicators for all land uses; determine what land is capable of sustaining; manage to achieve targets and indicators

Public Health/Nutrition

- Land Uses should be sustainable and appropriate. If one practices healthy land use then our population's health will improve and government health care cost will be reduced. Reduce the production of processed foods.