

## **Southern Foothills Community Stewardship Initiative**

### **Draft Outline of Proposed Recommendations**

**June 5, 2011**

The following Recommendations are presented in 'outline' form – that is, they do not contain detailed supporting points or explanation at this stage. We would appreciate your feedback on the scope, content and language of the Recommendations in this outline form.

**Please comment on the Recommendations with regards to:**

**Scope** – do they cover the important areas? Is there anything missing?

**Content** – do the Recommendations groupings or bullet points make sense?

**Language** – are the points clear? Too much jargon? Does it set the right tone?

#### ***Recommendation One: Integrated Planning***

Participants voiced strong support for proactive, long-term integrated planning.

- In the development of integrated plans, consult in a meaningful way with those who have first-hand knowledge of the area.
- Develop management strategies that are fair and inclusive of local interests.
- Employ sound interdisciplinary science in developing integrated plans.

#### ***Recommendation Two: Watershed Protection***

Participants determined that maintaining a healthy watershed should take priority over industrial, agricultural, residential and recreational land uses.

- Manage all parts of the watershed as a contiguous ecosystem. The natural watershed connectivity must be maintained and restored.
- Headwaters, tributaries, and main stem must be protected.
- Participants identified a need for better understanding of and consideration taken for the connections between ground water and surface water.
- Protect riparian zones and wetlands, and include these in watershed management plans.
- Land management is a critical component of watershed management.

### ***Recommendation Three: Connected Landscapes***

- Maintain connected, functioning landscapes and open spaces as a prime way of supporting healthy ecosystems and traditional economies in this region.
- Maintain the health and viability of native plant species.
- Manage development to allow for landscape connectivity and to discourage fragmentation.
- Provide economic incentives which support the land remaining in agriculture and discourage conversion of land to non- agricultural uses.

### ***Recommendation Four: Education and Capacity Building***

- Provide support for community education and awareness that promotes water and land stewardship as a shared responsibility.
- Reconnect people to the land, water and wildlife through education.
- Provide capacity building for municipal governments, non-profit organizations, community and stewardship groups, to facilitate local implementation of stewardship.

### ***Recommendation Four: Economic Incentives for Stewardship***

- Provide economic incentives for those who steward the provision of ecological goods and services.
- Enable economic incentives that discourage land fragmentation.
- Provide support for Alberta-based Conservation Land Trusts.
- Create a municipal tax category for conservation easements that enables a reduced tax assessment value.
- Phase in public payment mechanism for water with proceeds used to compensate land owners providing ecosystem services that help ensure water security.

### ***Recommendation Five: Managed Development and Land Use***

Participants proposed that thresholds and limits be determined for the amount of human use and development (e.g. recreation, industrial activity, residential

development) to occur in this region so as not to undermine the regenerative capacity of the landscape and ecosystems.

- Define thresholds and limits on cumulative human disturbances within any given area with regards to the continued provision of essential ecological goods and services.
- Limit the cumulative linear effects with regards to roads from industrial, agricultural, residential, and recreational developments and uses.
- Manage recreation use to minimize and mitigate impacts on water, wildlife and native plant species, and the land base. This should involve setting limits to use in certain areas.
- In advance of setting recreational limits, provide educational campaigns to inform the public about the negative impacts of certain recreational activities or practices.

***Recommendation Six: Local Implementation***

- Build the capacity for local (municipal) implementation, management and enforcement of integrated plans.
- Provide financial and technical support for local implementation of plans and stewardship initiatives from other levels of government.