

Why are the Beaver Hills Important?

The Beaver Hills is an area consisting of both public and private lands, and is the largest relatively undeveloped naturally treed area connecting the northern Boreal Forests in the north with the Aspen Parkland to the south forming an ecological link between these natural regions.

The Beaver Hills are a critical source of surface and ground water. Healthy forests, grasslands and wetlands filter rainfall, trap sediment and recycle nutrients, which protects and enhances water quality. These features also contribute to improving air quality.

This ecosystem contributes to quality of life of area residents and others by supporting biodiversity, conservation of wetlands and forests that help to maintain clean and abundant drinking water, clean air, and healthy lands.



BHI is about recommending, and putting into practice, those land uses that will best meet the needs of present generations, while safe guarding resources for the future.

Partners in the Beaver Hills Initiative:

Local Governments

Beaver County
Lamont County
Strathcona County

Government of Alberta

Agriculture and Rural Development
Environment & Sustainable Resource Development
Municipal Affairs
Tourism, Parks and Recreation

Government of Canada

Elk Island National Park, Parks Canada
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Academia

University of Alberta
Alberta Innovates Technology Futures

Industrial Partners

Alberta Industrial Heartland Association
Fort Air Partnership

Non-Government Organizations

Alberta Invasive Plants Council
Alberta Fish and Game Association
Alberta Lake Management Society
Alberta Land Trust Alliance
Alberta Sports Recreation & Wildlife Foundation
Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve
Cosmic Journey
Ducks Unlimited Canada
Edmonton and Area Land Trust
Land Stewardship Centre of Canada
Miistakis Institute
Nature Conservancy of Canada
North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance
Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
Worley Parsons

For more information, please contact:

Brenda Wispinski, Executive Director
E-mail: wispinsk@strathcona.ab.ca
Phone: 780-464-8280



WORKING TOGETHER ...

For a sustainable region,
through shared initiatives
and coordinated action

www.beaverhills.ab.ca

What are the Beaver Hills?

The Beaver Hills (also known as the Cooking Lake Moraine) are located in central Alberta, immediately east of the City of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

The Beaver Hills are a glacial moraine formed over 9,000 years ago.

The landscape is extensively treed, consists of rolling to hummocky terrain, rich in wetlands and Boreal mixed-wood forest habitat.

The 'knob and kettle' topography of the Beaver Hills supports a high diversity of vegetation, waterfowl, mammals and birds.

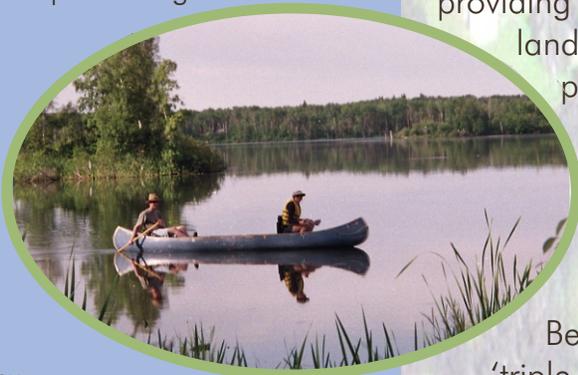
The Beaver Hills are distinctly different from the surrounding prairie lands in terms of the soils, terrain, climate and elevation. These bio-physical features contribute to a unique sense-of-place that is valued by both area residents and visitors.

The Beaver Hills are experiencing unprecedented development pressures for various land uses.

Did You Know...?

A 'moraine' is an unsorted, usually stony, accumulation of earth deposited by a glacier.

Photos courtesy of Ducks Unlimited Canada, & Terri Kembell, Sherwood Park News; Layout & map by Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada at Edmonton.



The Beaver Hills Initiative

Since 2000, the Beaver Hills Initiative (BHI) has grown from a collective recognition among governments and environmental non-governmental agencies, that in order for this ecosystem to remain sustainable, decisions on growth and development must consider the shared resources and their sensitivity to development and the triple-bottom line.

Partners in this innovative venture share and communicate relevant science-based information for an Integrated approach to bio-regional planning and ensure that stakeholders are informed and involved.

The BHI mission will be accomplished by providing land use and land management policy recommendations to the decision makers that recognize the unique qualities of this area.

All land-use decisions made for the Beaver Hills area must balance the 'triple bottom line'. Compatibilities between development pressures and ecological function must be found, to ensure the enjoyment of the area, quality of life for residents and future generations to come.



Did You Know...?

The Beaver Hills Initiative is an award-winning partnership that advances land-use planning within a bio-regional approach and includes the social, economic and ecological factors - equally.

BHI Achievements include:

-Voluntary partnership of local governments and over 30 other agencies with shared Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles

-Completed a Business Plan and secured funding

-Developed BHI Land Management Framework

-Created a land-use mapping model and GIS database

-2005 Recipient of Minister's Award for Municipal Excellence

-Alberta Emerald Foundation Award Nominations in 2005 & 2007

Did You Know...?

Up to 48 mammals, 250 bird species, 8 amphibians and reptiles have been identified in the Beaver Hills. This includes boreal species such as moose, cougar and black bear as well as grassland species like the sharp-tailed grouse and mule deer.

Quality of life and economic potential is closely tied to the health and function of our landscapes.