

# Beaver Hills Initiative

**Innovations in:**  
**Data and information sharing**  
**Strategic coordination of planning**  
**Partnership building**



## GIS Working Group:

The main objective of the Geographic Information Systems [GIS] WG is to support all other BHI working groups with their needs for geo-spatial technologies.

The GIS WG is comprised of GIS specialists from Strathcona County, Parks Canada, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada and Alberta Parks & Protected Areas.

Tasked with implementing the GIS Management Plan this working group will be involved data standardization; and the development of a web based data portal.

## Protected Areas WG:

The main objective of the Protected Areas WG is to encourage a higher level of collaboration between all agencies dealing with conservation lands in the Beaver Hills.

The goal of this WG is to explore habitat protection and reclamation options on public lands and discover new mechanisms to preserve landscape integrity and connectivity.

A draft Cooperation Plan is being developed and further working group meetings and workshops will be ongoing throughout the year. Final document presentation to the Board in December 2009.

## Communications & Education Working Group:

The C&E WG is actively linked to all the BHI working groups and responsible for promoting activities and project results on an on-going basis. Strategically targeting the needs of the BHI, the C&E WG's objective is to plan and organize outreach activities, promote education and awareness, and develop BHI's website, display materials, brochures and fact sheets.

The C&E WG members are represented by communications and outreach specialists with various NGO's, and provincial and federal government specialists.

Activities in 2008 will include developing presentation materials, conference planning, Communication and Marketing Plan review and a website upgrade.



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# Working Together



For a sustainable region, through shared initiatives and coordinated action

## Spring 2008 Newsletter

### BHI Upcoming Events

#### March

27-28 - Alberta Land Trust Alliance Workshop at Edmonton

#### April

2 - Strathcona County's Rural Living Fair at Ardrossan

6-8 - Community Planners Association of Alberta at Red Deer

21-23 - Alberta's Environment Conference at Edmonton

#### May

27-30 - Weeds Across Borders Conference at Banff

#### September

18-20 - BHI/ALMS Conference and Tour - Progressing with Stewardship at Sherwood Park

23-26 - Canadian Urban Forest Conference at Sherwood Park

#### November

11-14 - North American Lake Management Society Conference at Jasper

### Executive Director's Greetings

Welcome to the first edition of the BHI Newsletter for 2008.

2007 was an interesting and active year for the BHI. With many projects continuing, and experiencing the busy times of a municipal election last fall, we will be evaluating and improving our communication strategies. We also wish to evaluate our role, strategic plan and products to ensure we meet the needs of the BHI partners.

Reviewing and adapting the BHI Land Management Framework to the region will ensure that BHI provides the value, relevant data and information that the partnering organizations require.

Thank you once again to the partnering organizations and the community in supporting the ongoing efforts of the BHI; I look forward to working with you once again and to another very busy year.

Executive Director,  
Brenda Wispinski

### Benefits of the BHI Partnership:

Leveraging of funding, integration of expertise across disciplines and jurisdictions, sharing of resources by joint implementation of projects

Development of a world-class model of a sustainable community, addressing social, economic and environmentally factors equally

Data sharing and access for regional land use planning and ongoing land management



Map of the Beaver Hills Area

## BHI Partners:

### Local Governments:

Beaver County  
Lamont County  
Leduc County  
Strathcona County

### Government of Alberta:

Agriculture and Food  
Environment  
Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Sustainable Resource Development  
Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture

### Government of Canada:

Elk Island National Park,  
Parks Canada Agency  
P.F.R.A.,  
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada

### Academia:

University of Alberta

### Industrial Partners:

Alberta Industrial Heartland Assoc.  
Northeast Capital Industrial Assoc.  
Fort Air Partnership  
Strathcona Industrial Assoc.

### Non-Government Organizations:

Alberta Invasive Plants Council  
Alberta Fish and Game Assoc.  
Alberta Conservation Assoc.  
Alberta Lake Management Society  
Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve  
Ducks Unlimited Canada  
Kalyna Country  
Nature Conservancy of Canada  
North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance  
Royal Astronomical Society of Canada

## Planners Working Group:

The goal of the Planners WG is to raise awareness about the uniqueness and vulnerability of the Beaver Hills ecosystem and explore tools and mechanisms that will provide a context by which the land use decision makers, land managers and the public will support policy and legislation to protect this unique landscape.

The Planners WG guided the completion and evaluation of the Landscape Management Framework Phase 2 which has provided the following products:

- a) Geospatial modeling of the five Ecological Functional Zones (EFZ) comprising the core ecological elements of: air quality, water abundance and quality of surface and ground water, biodiversity, and habitat connectivity.
- b) The determination of broad management objectives and Environmental Best Management Practices for each EFZ.
- c) A review of the authority and tools provided by the Municipal Government Act (MGA) for management of the environment by municipal governments.
- d) A set of recommended actions and alternative land use approaches for each of the EFZs that could be encouraged within policy in order to sustain the specific resources.

Integrating this decision support tool into formal municipal planning processes is underway to varying degrees by the municipal planners. Ongoing education and awareness of how the Framework can benefit municipal planning is a key task of this working group.

**Planners WG Chair,  
Dr. Guy Swinnerton  
Professor Emeritus, UofA**



## Research & Monitoring Working Group:

Key projects in 2008 include:

- 1) Phase II of the Fire History Study will demonstrate importance of fire-proofing on private and public lands, as well as a Woodlot Management Program to integrate fuel load management techniques and reforestation strategies. Jan'08-Jan'09. (\$30,000)
- 2) Wetland Assessment Protocols developed in conjunction with the Alberta Research Council, including a Volunteer Engagement for local community groups and watershed stewardship groups. Mar'08-Mar'09 (\$30,000)
- 3) Wetland Inventory of existing and historically drained wetlands in partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada and Alberta Environment. Fall 2008 (\$30,000)
- 4) Upland Vegetation Classification for BHI target area being completed by Parks Canada. March 2009
- 5) Invasive Alien Species Management Plan and inventory, in partnership with Alberta Agriculture and Food and local Ag Fieldmen/ Ag Service Boards. Mar'08-Mar'09 (\$35,000)
- 6) Ag Capture/Ag-Profiling, a geospatial assessment of the agri-food industry within BHI area and the Alberta Capital Region, rural & urban linkages and socio-economic drivers in partnership with AAFC-PFRA. June'07-Jan'09 (\$10,000)
- 7) Transfer of Development Credits Feasibility Study and Model Development, in partnership with Alberta Research Council, Ducks Unlimited Canada and Max Bell Foundation. Nov'07-Nov'08 (\$60,000)
- 8) Air Quality Monitoring Study using Non-vascular Plants, in partnership with Fort Air Partnership, BA Energy, UofA, and BHI. Information will form part of the data base for the Alberta Environment Cumulative Effects Air Monitoring project in conjunction with Alberta's Industrial Heartland. July'07-Dec'08 (\$35,000)

## Executive Working Group:

The Executive WG is made up of BHI's Chairman, Executive Director and Chairs of all Working Groups. It serves as a coordinating body to implement the 2007-2010 Business Plan. It ensures consistency of purpose, sharing of resources, effective project management and scheduling monthly Board of Directors meetings.

## Councillors Working Group:

Authority for decision making rests with each municipal council, and the Councillors' WG's key activity is facilitating open and interactive dialogue among the member Municipalities of the BHI. Implementation of the Land Management Framework will be a key task of this Working Group.

Councillors WG Chair,  
Councillor Glen Lawrence,  
Ward 7, Strathcona County



**Vision:** The Beaver Hills Initiative values the region for its natural beauty, quality of life and supports cooperative efforts to sustain the quality of water, land, air, natural resources, and community development.