



CITY POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: C531

REFERENCE:

Council 1995 07 25

ADOPTED BY:

City Council
17 July 2007

SUPERSEDES:

Policy C467

PREPARED BY: Office of Natural Areas

DATE: 5 June 2007

TITLE: Natural Area Systems

Policy Statement:

Since Edmonton was settled more than 100 years ago, the natural environment has supported us and shaped our collective identity. Edmontonians are proud of the city's natural heritage. To safeguard our natural capital and the associated ecological services, the City of Edmonton is committed to conserving, protecting, and restoring our natural uplands, wetlands, water bodies, and riparian areas, as an integrated and connected system of natural areas throughout the city. Natural area systems provide essential habitat for plants and animals, support biodiversity, and maintain a high quality of life for current and future citizens by supplying critical ecological services, as well as opportunities for education, research, appreciative forms of recreation, and aesthetic and spiritual inspiration.

The City of Edmonton will balance ecological and environmental considerations with economic and social considerations in its decision making and demonstrate that it has done so. The City of Edmonton recognizes that it can accomplish the work that is required to achieve conservation more efficiently and effectively by supporting and developing partnerships to achieve effective conservation results. Therefore, the City will lead by example – engaging the public in natural area issues, and encouraging businesses, residents, and the community to secure new natural area systems and steward what we have effectively.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Enhance and sustain the quality of life for Edmontonians.
- Conserve, protect, and restore biodiversity throughout Edmonton recognizing the urban context that we work within;
- Ensure consistent, uniform and equitable conservation practices that are based on the best available science;
- Direct Administration to:
 - plan our city so that our ecological systems will function effectively at neighbourhood, city and regional scales,
 - conserve natural area systems in discharging their duties, and
 - require ecological information to support planning and development applications;
- Conserve, protect, and restore natural area systems through the physical planning and development process; according to the provisions of municipal, provincial and federal policy and legislation;
- Encourage voluntary conservation and corporate and private sponsorship of natural areas;
- Promote the awareness and participation of landowners, the general public and non-government organizations in conserving, preserving, and restoring natural areas; and
- Incorporate the local ecological knowledge of Edmonton's citizens and organizations into our decisions.

This policy is subject to any specific provisions of the Municipal Government Act or other relevant legislation or Union Agreement.