



URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE - CALGARY

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Nose Creek
Water Mgmt

August 11, 2004

Tim Dietzler, Agricultural Fieldman
M.D. of Rocky View No. 44
911 - 32 Ave N.E.
Calgary, AB
T2E 6X6

Dear Tim,

Re: Nose Creek Water Management Plan

Thank you for including UDI-Calgary as a stakeholder in this review process and requesting feedback from us into the work you've accomplished thus far with the Nose Creek Water Management Plan. We would like to see this document created collaboratively with industry to be flexible, fair and to encourage innovation in overcoming future obstacles.

The questionnaire doesn't fully acknowledge the environmental responsibilities the development industry has committed to the community. Our industry is very cognizant to the sensitivity of riparian ecosystems and the relationship development plays within the environment. Many communities built by our members have demonstrated this by integrating features such as wetlands and natural area habitats into their design. We understand the intrinsic value of protecting the environment and make the effort to enhance it where it is most logical and appropriate.

It is important to note the related cost to the homebuyer that accompanies an increase in regulatory requirements for environmental protection. If other stakeholders in this review process support the idea of further entrenching environmental protection through increasing regulatory requirements, the associated monetary implications should be included in this review. In all likelihood, the level of support would be altered if stakeholders understood the actual costs associated with increased regulatory requirements for environmental protection.

We feel innovation and new ideas should be encouraged to protect environmental values without penalizing any particular stakeholder group. We also emphasize the need for logical and realistic balance between protection of the environment and human use of the environment. It may not be reasonable to protect the environment by strictly excluding people from its use.

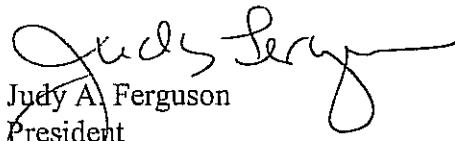
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Our industry supports protecting and enhancing riparian habitat and environmentally sensitive ecosystems; this is demonstrated by our contribution in creating the City of Calgary Wetland Conservation Plan and our long standing commitment to responsibly incorporating environmentally sensitive habitat into our built communities.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to participate and we look forward to further consultation.

Best regards,


Judy A. Ferguson
President

cc: Karin Finley



Nose Creek Water Management Plan

Public Consultation Process – Development Industry

Objective

The objective of the public consultation process is to create and maintain a constructive dialogue with watershed stakeholders to ensure the long-term viability of the plan.

Objectives include:

- To allow stakeholders to influence the direction of water management planning process.
- To promote public understanding of the hydrological processes in the watershed, the importance of riparian areas and the aquatic eco-system
- To educate the stakeholders about how various activities impact watershed health and what alternatives and Best Practices can be considered.
- To promote effective communication between regulatory agencies and stakeholders

Focus Group Sessions

The purpose of the sessions is to identify stakeholder concerns and issues and provide a vehicle for the stakeholder input to the water management plan.

Discussion Topics / Questions

Protection of Riparian Areas along Nose/West Nose Creek and Wetlands

- 1) Recognizing that all surface water in the watershed is linked, would you support the implementation of stream buffers, setbacks, and other measures designed to improve and protect the health of riparian areas?

Yes, UDI generally supports the idea of protecting the health of riparian areas and would like to be involved in any decision-making that would provide the details of implementation in the form of 'stream buffers, setbacks, and other measures' since these directly affect the desirability and developability of land.

Which other actions would you support that would protect riparian and wetland health?

Early identification of said riparian/wetland areas with ability to restore areas if needed. (Buffers/setbacks should have min/max limits, however, should be flexible/negotiable on a site by site basis.)

Purchase of identified riparian lands by Government / regulatory body to ensure requirement of such land and long-term protection.

Use of MR dedication for protection of riparian areas.

- 2) How do we determine appropriate development setbacks, buffers, and other measures designed to improve riparian health as it relates to land development practices?

Specification of what is being accomplished with this study – are we trying to protect or improve riparian health? That is, identify the existing condition of riparian areas and acknowledge the possibility that land development practices may already be improving riparian areas and creating wetlands.

Provision of reports / research indicating existing effects of different forms of development and uses to identify what, if anything, needs to change to protect or improve riparian health.

Early site investigation / identification / analysis that outlines riparian areas – again based on site by site approach.

- 3) How can we ensure that infrastructure (bridges, pathways, ponds) do not compromise riparian areas?

Question should read: "How can we ensure that infrastructure (bridges, pathways, ponds) 'enhance' riparian areas?"

Please note that people in general (and often, their pets) are the culprits of disturbance for desiring to be near water in its many forms – the infrastructure is typically provided as access for people. However, infrastructure may also act as a control by providing a means of access rather than random access:

*Allow for access interactions by focusing access to specific areas and identifying specific uses, i.e. pedestrian or vehicular, in those areas.
Identify and follow BMP's before and during construction*

Protection of Water Quality and Aquatic Ecosystems

- 1) What actions, related to land development practices, would you recommend that would ensure better water quality protection?

*Erosion control measures and monitoring
Allow for rehabilitation/restoration of areas
Use of stormwater ponds or equivalent control structures
Education of community purchasers / users*

- 2) How can we ensure that water management plan and land use are better integrated?

*Provide a clear direction and focus for water management to land owners without penalizing them (i.e. incurring extra costs) for having water on their land
Initiate conversations / discussions early in land planning stages
Provide opportunities / constraints research
Create a land use for purposes of 'protection' that removes or reduces other green space land uses (MR and ER) yet does not cost in acreage assessment*

- 3) How can we encourage the use of Best Management Practices in land development to provide better water quality protection? Which BMPs would you recommend?

*The members of UDI already use and are already required to use BMPs in land development.
It would be encouraging to see consistent BMPs for all groups involved in land development and use
It would be more encouraging if there was recognition of the development industry's efforts to use BMPs that would translate to quicker approval times and/or lower development costs*

- 4) If BMPs are required to be implemented, what would be your expectations of the government/regulators with respect to funding, maintenance, or standards?

*Government / regulators would set performance standards in consultation with stakeholders;
Government / regulators would maintain wetlands and riparian areas.
Government funding to purchase riparian areas / wetlands, provide incentives for use of BMPs, promote public education of significance
Performance expectations must be the same for both development industry and government/regulators*

- 5) The implementation of BMPs may result in higher development costs. What would be the benefits of BMP implementation that would offset some of these costs?

There are no benefits of BMP implementation that offset costs incurred.

For consideration:

If riparian areas and wetlands are considered to be a part of the overall watershed, should it be viewed similar to an utility that provides a benefit to its users. As a result, should it be installed or maintained as a utility at no cost to the developer?

What incentives would be provided should the development industry exceed expectations or improve on what existed originally?

- 6) What can we do to ensure a long-term economic viability and watershed sustainability?

Continued cooperation between parties involved

- 7) Do you think that ecological protection should be the foundation for water management plan?

The only reason why we have need of a water management plan is to protect the environment. However, we need to balance the protection of the environment with quality of human life which includes consideration of economic impacts, costs, transportation needs and recreation, among others.

- 8) Do you think that more legislative and enforcement action is needed to protect watershed ecosystems?

Consistency in application of existing legislation and enforcement for all is needed and education of general public is necessary prior to the need for 'more action'.

- 9) What type of incentives for the development industry can you recommend that would encourage better water management?

*-reduction of MR dedication or removal of ER dedication or creation of a hybrid land use designation that benefits developer
-relaxation/credit of acreage assessment
-cost sharing opportunities
-water quality 'trading' (similar to emissions trading)
-outright purchase of land by government / regulator for purposes of preservation*

Stormwater Runoff Conservation and Reuse

- 1) Would you encourage and support water conservation initiatives (stormwater reuse, wetland retention, infiltration and other strategies that promote natural hydrological processes)?

Yes, already in place. A consideration of costs of implementation and for the end-user are always required from development industry's perspective – this tempers any encouragement and/or support of water conservation initiatives.

- 2) What would be the benefits of water conservation for land development industry?

*-irrigation opportunities/storm water re-use
-amenities*

Education and Knowledge

- 1) Is the information you've been provided about the Nose Creek basin useful and adequate?

*Adequate for now
-need constant updates/information*

- 2) Will you use the information in the Water Management Plan when planning new developments within the Nose Creek Watershed?

As it becomes 'required' through legislation

- 3) Do you think that additional research related to water quality improvements and health of Nose Creek is needed?

Yes

