



Clearwater County Agricultural Service Board

Strategic Plan

2017-2020

ADOPTED  
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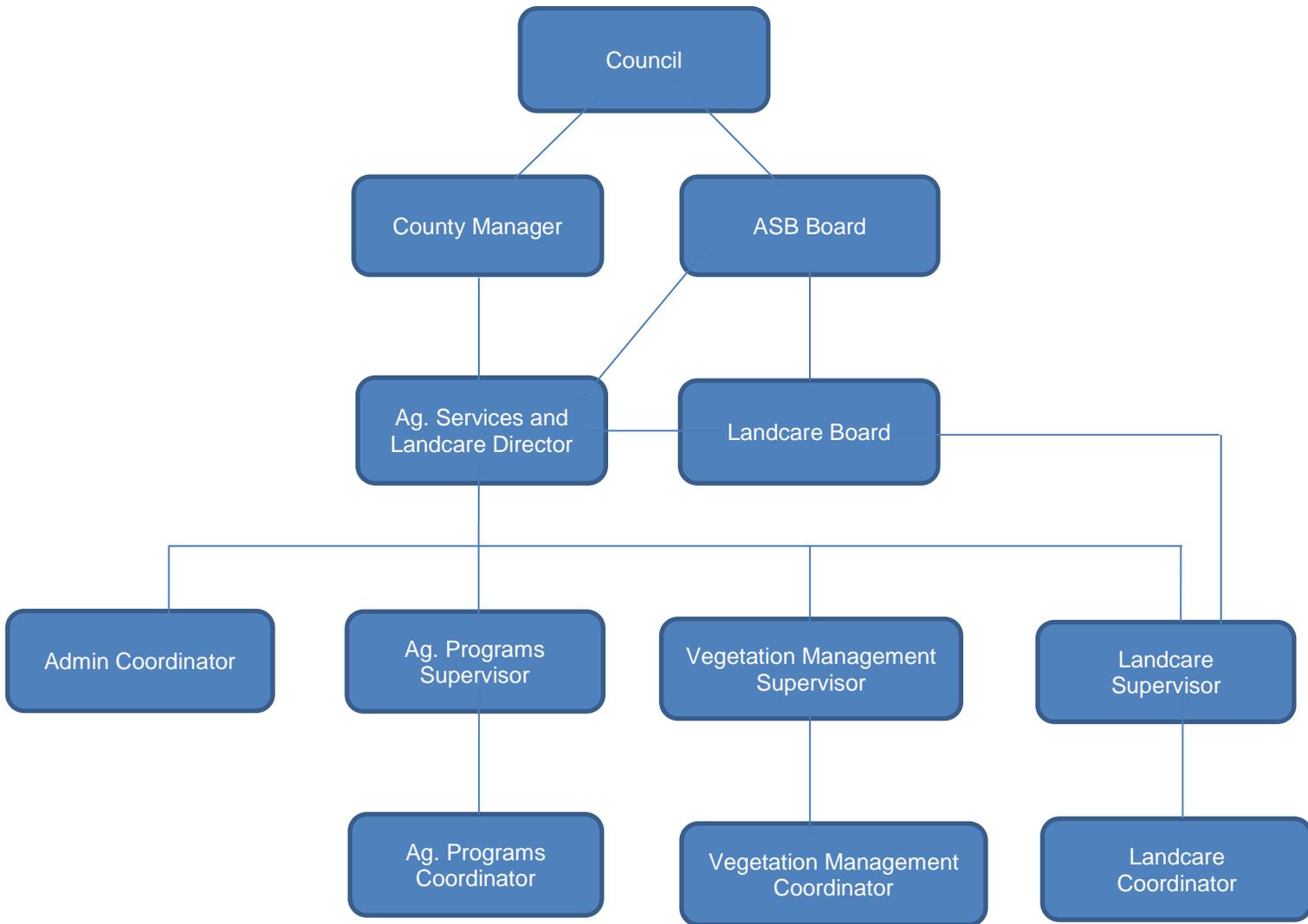
## **Executive Summary**

Clearwater County Agricultural Service Board is one of 70 formed throughout Alberta. Agricultural Service Boards (ASBs) date back to the early 1940s when a meeting between municipalities and the provincial Department of Agriculture regarding weeds and conservation issues paved the way for the formation of ASBs. In 1944 the Municipal District of Conrich (now Rocky View County) became the first Agricultural Service Board in Alberta followed by Red Deer County who formed their board in 1945. Also, in 1945, the provincial government passed the Agricultural Service Boards Act creating the legislative frame work enabling ASBs to preserve and protect agricultural and environmental resources, in their municipality.

Clearwater County's ASB formed in 1957 when three Improvement Districts, 10 (Rocky – Leslieville), 11 (Alder Flats) and 58 (James River Bridge) chose to organize one ASB to oversee agricultural and environmental matters within the three jurisdictions. In 1968 the three improvement districts amalgamated into one improvement district which would become the Municipal District of Clearwater in 1985 and Clearwater County in 1999.

Today Clearwater County Council appoints two Councilors, five community members and one alternate to serve on the ASB. The ASB also appoints members from the Board and community to serve on subcommittees of the Board.

## Agricultural Services and Landcare Board Organizational Chart



The Clearwater County ASB operational priorities have changed significantly and often since first establishing in 1957. Although the ASB has changed and shifted along with the needs of the community, its core focus on protecting and supporting the Agricultural industry and the associated land has remained consistent throughout the Board's history and remains the core focus of the Board today.

## **Environmental Scan**

Clearwater County is a large rural municipality located in central Alberta, along the south-eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. With a large area (1,800,000 hectares) and a population of 12,278 (2011 Census), the County is home to five hamlets as well as agriculture, oil and gas, forestry, aggregate and tourism industries. These industries, and the residents that support them, rely significantly on the natural capital found within Clearwater County. Three urban municipalities are also located within Clearwater County, the Town of Rocky Mountain House, the Village of Caroline, and the Summer Village of Burntstick Lake.

The Agriculture industry in Clearwater County is considerably diverse in the commodities produced but also in the size and nature of operations. The County contains diverse soils including, dark black, black and grey wooded. Livestock production is the most common sector found in the County with a robust forage crop production industry supporting the livestock sectors. Annual crop production has become more common and now competes on a meaningful level with perennial crop production for the most productive land. Annual crop producers however are limited to growing crops that mature within 95 to 110 frost free days. Agritourism, Agriforestry, vegetable/fruit production, and farm gate to plate producers make up a small percentage of producers and production. Coupled with the consumers' changing attitude towards food, these operations are becoming more popular, viable and sustainable.

Located in the headwaters of two major watersheds (Red Deer River and North Saskatchewan River) Clearwater County is a steward of drinking water for over a million Albertans. Clearwater County and its residents and landowners take the stewardship of this public resource very seriously. Through urban partnerships and the establishment of Clear Water Landcare Board, a subcommittee of the ASB, the Board has recognized that demonstrating Agriculture's commitment to environmental stewardship and assisting acreages located within agricultural lands provide value back to the agriculture producers who make up the Board's core clientele.

## **Environmental Scan**

### **Stakeholders**

Stakeholders can be generally defined as anyone who is impacted by or has the potential to impact an organization. Clearwater County Agricultural Services and Landcare has a variety of stakeholders who either access service or assist in the administration of services.

## Clients

- Agricultural producers and landowners
- Life style / acreage residents and landowners
- Industry, including energy, forestry and mining.
- Tourism
- Community groups
- Youth groups
- Town of Rocky Mountain House, Village of Caroline, Summer village of Burntstick lake

## Partners

- Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Transportation, other Government of Alberta departments, and the Federal Government.
- Other Agricultural Service Boards
- Grey Wooded Forage Association
- The Red Deer River and North Saskatchewan River Watershed Protection and Advisory Councils
- Alberta Invasive Plant Council
- Chambers of Commerce
- Rocky Mountain House and Caroline Ag. Societies
- Sundre Petroleum Operators group and West Central Stake Holders Association.
- Schools and post-secondary institutes
- Commodity groups and other industry related organizations
- Agriculture business
- Sasquatch and Partners
- Medicine River Water Shed Society
- Cows and Fish
- Alberta Land Stewardship Network
- Alberta Wood Lot Extension Society
- Clearwater Trails Initiative
- Bighorn Back Country Society
- EPCOR
- West Fraser
- Aspen Ranch Camp
- Alberta Conservation Association
- Junior Forest Wardens
- Habitat for Humanity
- Ducks Unlimited
- Trout Unlimited
- Alberta Fish and Game Association
- Land Stewardship Centre
- Rocky Regional Solid Waste

## **Agricultural Service Board Mission and Vision**

### **Purpose**

The Clearwater County Agricultural Services Board is the voice of agriculture to Council, responding to issues of local, provincial, national and international interest. Through the Clearwater County Agricultural Services Department:

- We provide programs and services dedicated to the well-being of the agricultural community
- We focus on preserving and protecting agricultural and environmental resources.
- We administer agricultural and environmental legislation pursuant to the Agriculture Service Board Act.

### **Vision**

Clearwater County is a thriving community with a variety of agricultural operations all given full opportunity to be sustainable and to co-exist in a well-balanced rural community.

### **Mission**

Clearwater County Agricultural Service Board provides high quality services to the community ensuring the protection of our natural capital, quality of life, and traveling public.

### **Core Values**

Integrity – We support local research and provide reliable, objective information.

Partnership – We connect with local, provincial and national resources.

Accountability – We achieve our mission in a transparent and efficient manner.

Commitment – We are approachable and follow through on requests.

Representation – Our focus is on what is best for the whole.

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**Strategic Goal 1: Deliver services to enhance the social, environmental and economic well-being of the agricultural community**

**Objective 1.1: Promote weed management**

Strategies:

1.1.1 Develop and distribute resource material for all regulated weeds found in or near Clearwater County

1.1.2 Organize at least two weed workshops yearly.

1.1.3 Organize or participate in at least two industry meetings/events.

1.1.4 Administer the Arbutus/Alhambra, Everdell and Ricinus community driven weed programs and consider future requests by communities to be included in the program

1.1.5 Administer the Eradicable Weed Program as a tool for early detection and rapid response.

**Objective 1.2 Increase the awareness of environmental farm issues**

Strategies:

1.2.1 Support the Landcare Board through the allocation of appropriate resources as well as providing timely direction and appointments.

1.2.2 Collaborate with agencies and organizations to promote the work done by the agriculture community to protect and enhance the environment.

**Objective 1.3: Provide access to specialized farm equipment and commodities not readily available in the private sector**

Strategies:

1.3.1 Maintain the appropriate knowledge, approvals, facilities and relationships necessary to retail weed and pest control products.

1.3.2 Maintain a safe and accessible fleet of rental equipment.

**Objective 1.4:** Promote effective pest management practices

Strategies:

1.4.1 Distribute resource material and organize workshops and seminars

**Objective 1.5:** Evaluate and promote innovative agricultural practices

Strategies:

1.5.1 Organize one applied research trial or plot yearly.

**Objective 1.6:** Enhance the rural / urban relationship and celebrate our agricultural heritage

Strategies:

1.6.1 Teach classroom agriculture to at least 3 urban grade 4 classes yearly

1.6.2 Give out at least three Rural Beautification Awards yearly

1.6.3. Give out at least three Century Farm Awards yearly.

1.6.4 Present the Farm Family Award every second year.

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**Strategic Goal 2: Develop agricultural policies to meet the needs of the County**

**Objective 2.1:** Set clear parameters for the administration of services

Strategies:

2.1.1 Review the ASB. strategic plan every 4 years.

2.1.2 Review and develop policies as necessary.

**Objective 2.2:** Maintain strong and effective relationships with similar and like-minded municipalities.

Strategies:

2.2.1 Actively participate in the ASB regional, provincial and chairman/fieldman meetings seeking opportunities to collaborate on programs, policy and services.

2.2.2 Actively participate in regional, provincial, national and international groups and committees.

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**Strategic Goal 3: To administer the ASB Act and other agricultural legislation**

**Objective 3.1:** Administer the ASB Act, Weed Control Act, Agricultural Pests Act, Soil Conservation Act and cooperate in the administration of the Animal Health Act

Strategies:

3.1.1 Review and develop the appropriate policies needed to administer the acts.

3.1.2 Appoint at least 4 regional weed inspectors yearly.

3.1.2 Appoint at least 2 pest inspectors yearly.

3.1.2 Appoint at least 1 soil conservation inspector yearly

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**Strategic Goal 4:** To foster good will and cooperation among agencies and individuals with a mutual interest in agriculture

**Objective 4.1:** To cooperate with provincial and federal agencies; and stakeholder groups to enhance program services for the betterment of agriculture

Strategies:

4.1.1 Attend workshops, meetings and events hosted or organized by Alberta Agriculture.

4.1.2 Seek appointments to actively participate on advisory councils and boards.

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**Strategic Goal 5:** To communicate effectively and consistently with stakeholders.

**Objective 5.1:** Communicate with client stakeholders informing them of Agricultural and Environmental issues and opportunities.

Strategies:

5.1.1 Review and maintain the Agricultural Services communication strategy.

5.1.2 Provide a weekly article to the Mountaineer.

5.1.3 Maintain up to date and constant messaging on the County's website and in the county's publication.

**Objective 5.2:** Communicate effectively with partner stakeholders influencing and collaborating with them in the best interest of our client stakeholders.

Strategies:

5.2.1 Review and maintain the Agricultural Services communication strategy.

5.2.2 Actively participate in the Regional and Provincial Agricultural Services Board resolution process.

## **Moving Forward**

As social, political and economic drivers continue to fluctuate, this strategic plan will be revisited informally on an annual basis with the ASB and related staff and will be revised as necessary to ensure that objectives and strategies remain relevant to achieving the long-term vision and mission of the ASB.

The Strategic Plan will be formally reviewed in 2020 as part of ASB's commitment to achieve its mission in a transparent and efficient manner.