

Topic: Agriculture and Community Sustainability Overview

**Introduction:**

The purpose of the presentation is to give an overview of the services provided by the department, as well as current projects, key issues in the community, local opportunities and potential challenges. The Agriculture Services Department provides a wide array of community services including vegetation and pest management; weed inspection; horticulture; environmental compliance; agricultural and sustainability planning, policy, and extension programming and ALUS.

**Key Points/FAQs:****Weed Inspection:**

- Access to property – Under the Weed Control Act, County appointed inspectors have the right to access property to inspect for prohibited noxious and noxious weeds.
- Issuing weed notices – Agricultural Services uses an educational approach to weed control on private property with issuing of weed notices as the last actions taken to gain compliance.

**Pest Surveillance:**

- Parkland County does not remove nuisance pests
- Trap rentals are available for skunks, magpies, squirrels
- Assist Producers in cases of confirmed predation on livestock.
- Provide information to residents regarding nuisance pests.
- Use an educational approach on clubroot management

**Vegetation Management:**

- Roadside mowing is for weed control
- Roadside mowing occurs on a rotational basis
- Alignment of program goal across the Weed Inspection and vegetation control programs that contribute to the Provincial Assurance program.

**County Land Management Support:**

- Hazard Tree Directive guides the assessment and removal of trees from Municipal and Environmental Reserves
- Trained arborists are used to assess whether trees pose a hazard and appropriate mitigation measures.
- There are a number of municipal reserves available for agriculture uses while remaining accessible to the public.
- Encroachment on reserves poses potential environmental risks and liabilities.

#### Landscape Services:

- Provides beautification to County facilities and signage
- Ensures compliance with Engineering Standards
- Horticulture advice is provided to residents, just not in person.

#### Agriculture and Sustainability Plans:

- No energy efficiency or climate adaptation programming is currently available to residents through the County.
- The ICSP outlines the County's vision for a sustainable future through long-term objectives, strategies and actions.
- The Hamlet Strategy summarizes key service levels
- Policies exist for dark sky lighting, naturalized stormwater management, increase biodiversity, biophysical assessments, and management of contaminated sites.

#### Agronomics and Sustainability Programs:

- Extension programs are primarily delivered to meet overarching department goals
- Pre-covid certain event were run annually (producer dinner, rain barrel sale, pond days, etc.)
- The Green Acreages Program (funding for environmental projects on acreage properties) was transitioned to the Land Stewardship Centre in 2020.
- Naturalized shorelines to increase bank stabilization following the 2018 ice heaves.

#### ALUS:

- Provides financial and project expertise support to producers for infrastructure and practices that increase ecosystem service production.
- Only agricultural land is eligible.
- Program is funded primarily by government grants and corporate donations.
- Currently exploring opportunities for ALUS projects and natural assets to assist with drainage issues.

#### Environmental Regulatory Compliance:

- Lowers County risk by ensuring facilities and operations meet applicable standards such as the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act and the Water Act.
- Ensures County environmental liabilities are measured and recorded to meet the Public Sector Accounting Standards.
- Monitors contaminated sites to limit any negative impacts to surrounding landowners and the environment.
- Development and Planning applications may require a biophysical assessment review if the activity poses a potential negative impact on sensitive environmental features.

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