

## North Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council

The Government of Alberta has established a Regional Advisory Council (RAC) for the North Saskatchewan Region to provide strategic advice in the development of the [North Saskatchewan Regional Plan](#) (NSRP). Members of the RAC are appointed by Cabinet through a public and transparent nomination process, which included a public advertising campaign.

RAC is composed of a cross-section of individuals who live, work, recreate and/or have an interest in the region, and are able to strategically consider what is best for the entire region at a holistic level. Members are expected to provide their expertise and perspectives of the region and not represent their respective company or organization's position.

The members of the North Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council are:

Wendy Boje	Stephen Stanley
Doug King	Peter Vana
Patrick Alexander	Liv Vors
Thomas Burton	Robert Winship
Nicholas Gafuik	Allen Wright
Leslie Gammie	Marla Zapach
Robert Gibb	Stan Delorme
Edward Gibbons	Robert Phillips
Arnold Hanson	Leonard Wade
Lorne Hindbo	Cecil Janvier
Tim Hofstra	Cecil Andersen
Edward Parke	Charles Newell
Neal Sarnecki	David Taylor
Tracy Scott	

### Responsibilities

RAC members are expected to prepare for and attend all council meetings. Alternates will not be allowed. RAC is scheduled to meet approximately seven to 10 times over the course of completing its work at varying locations within the North Saskatchewan region. Tentative schedules of dates for the RAC meetings are:

- July 29 – 31
- August 12 – 14
- August 26 – 28
- September 9 – 11
- September 23 – 25
- October 7 – 9
- October 21 – 23

## **Terms of Reference**

The RAC provides advice to the Government of Alberta based on a terms of reference for each regional plan. The Terms of Reference for Developing the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan provides guidance on the scope of the regional plan and outlines key areas where the RAC's advice is sought. These areas include:

- The vision, outcomes and strategic directions proposed for the North Saskatchewan region;
- Continued growth of Alberta Industrial Heartland and Capital Region as a value-add energy sector and supporting growth of the Lower Athabasca region;
- Enhancing transportation, transmission, pipelines and access to markets;
- Maintaining agricultural lands and meeting demand for agriculture and agri-food products;
- Enhancing recreation opportunities to meet growing demands for off-highway vehicle use and random camping;
- Enhancing information sharing and building stronger relationships with Aboriginal peoples;
- Promoting inter-municipal planning;
- Increasing cumulative footprint of communities and the need to use land efficiently;
- Achieving an appropriate balance for lakes in the region between a healthy environment with the current and future pressures and uses, including recreation, municipal, industrial and agricultural activities;
- Identification of potential new conservation areas to support biodiversity, specifically the identification of new potential conservation areas that are managed to protect sensitive habitats and maintain ecological systems and processes;
- Improving the way working landscapes are managed to maintain ecosystem function and biodiversity; and
- Recognizing private landowners for their stewardship and conservation and opportunities to increase private landowner awareness and use of voluntary tools.

### **For more information, contact:**

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## Implementation of the Alberta Wetland Policy

The *Alberta Wetland Policy* (2013) provides the strategic direction and tools required to enable informed wetland management decisions in the long-term interest of Albertans. The policy will minimize the loss and degradation of wetlands, while allowing for continued growth and economic development in the province. It replaces *Wetland Management in the Settled Area of Alberta: an Interim Policy* (1993).

White Area implementation of the *Alberta Wetland Policy* began on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, and will be followed by Green Area implementation on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. From September 2014 to June 2015, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) will publicly and sequentially introduce a series of directives, guides, and tools that will enable White Area implementation. This approach will permit Albertans to begin preliminary application of the tools and systems enabled under the new policy, and to assess how the new policy will affect their respective activities. A list of directives, guides, and tools, in conjunction with expected public release dates will be posted and regularly updated on the ESRD website.

Education and outreach programs, as well as training opportunities for various stakeholder groups across the province, will accompany the implementation process. This will help ensure that Albertans understand the various aspects of the new policy, as well as any potential implications for their respective sectors and activities.

As of **June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015**, proponents will be expected to submit wetland-related *Water Act* applications in accordance with new requirements established under the *Alberta Wetland Policy*. This coincides with the beginning of the field season for conducting wetland field assessments.

Given the significant period of overlap between existing and new policy, the following points of clarification have been developed for White Area implementation:

- **Where planning for development in wetlands commences after September 2, 2014:** *Water Act* applications should be prepared in accordance with directives, guides, and tools under the *Alberta Wetland Policy*, as they become available.
- **Where wetland field assessments are completed prior to or on May 31, 2015:** ESRD and the Alberta Energy Regulator will continue to receive and assess *Water Act* applications for development in wetlands within the primary context of *Wetland Management in the Settled Area of Alberta: an Interim Policy* (1993).
- **Where wetland field assessments are completed on or after June 1, 2015:** *Water Act* applications for development in wetlands will be evaluated in accordance with the new *Alberta Wetland Policy* Administrative Procedures.

As of September 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, the above process will be restarted for the Green Area, with the *Alberta Wetland Policy* being fully implemented across the province by June 2016.

The *Alberta Wetland Policy* does not apply retroactively to Water Act approvals issued prior to the policy implementation date. Any pending Water Act applications for which no decision has been made may be grandfathered under the Interim Policy (1993), if the impact of wetland development is not fundamentally changed from the original application. *Alberta Wetland Policy* implementation remains subject to the signing Director's discretion, and may vary on an individual project basis

As part of a comprehensive and integrated policy implementation process, ESRD will continue to work closely with the Alberta Energy Regulator and affected stakeholders to ensure an open, transparent, and informed policy rollout in the White Area.

**For more information, contact:**

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## **Partner Profile: Alberta Pulse Growers – Why Sustainability Matters**

*Submitted by Alberta Pulse Growers Commission*

Increasing population, pressure on the land base, demands on water and challenges to biodiversity – these are all trends that will dramatically affect the future. What can agriculture do to keep these trends from limiting production? What role will the cropping sector play? How can industry contribute to the sustainability discussion? More specifically, why do pulse growers care?

Since 1989, when Alberta Pulse Growers (APG) became a recognized Commission with legislation governing their operations, the organization has been working to help farmers sell more pulses. Seeded pulse acres have also grown in that time from around 63,000 acres to over 1.5 million and the number of producers who grow pulse crops has also increased. Today, APG represents over 5,000 growers in Alberta. The organization is producer-led and focused on supporting the research, marketing, and extension as well as consumer and producer outreach with respect to the following crops: field pea, dry bean, chickpea, lentil, faba bean and soybean.

Pulses are primarily marketed as an export crop leaving Canadian shores to feed populations elsewhere. Canada is one of the largest export countries providing pulses to the world. Alberta comes in second of all Canadian provinces in producing field peas, third in dry bean production and is quickly becoming a significant producer of faba bean. Lentils and chickpeas are smaller acres but also part of the export contribution. Soybean is still considered a new crop for Alberta and while acres are small at this time, there is potential in the future for this crop.

Key areas of interest for the organization include investments in research – agronomy, breeding, health and nutrition, and pulse ingredient innovation, as well as providing grower extension and outreach to both consumers and producers about benefits of pulses. In addition, APG works with pulse grower organizations and the trade (pulse processors and exporters) from across Canada through Pulse Canada, the national organization. From a national perspective, issues such as transportation, market access, health and nutrition, food product innovation and sustainability are the focus.

Pulse crops have a fantastic sustainability story. From the farm to the plate, pulse crops have a great fit in a sustainable environment. With a low carbon footprint due to their ability to fix nitrogen, this reduces global greenhouse gases because there is less use of nitrogen fertilizers – a major contributor to emissions. Another advantage tied to nitrogen fixing abilities of pulse crops and reduction in fertilizer use is that less fertilizer is needed to be produced so they contribute to reduced consumption of non-renewable energy.

Farmers who have experienced pulses as part of their rotations have also realized what the crop does for them. From benefits of early seeding-early harvest, use of less inputs because of plant nodulation and nitrogen fixation, and having a crop that returns soil to a farmer-described ‘mellow’ state. In rotation, pulses break insect and weed cycles and can provide opportunities for increasing diversity of soil microorganisms which can be beneficial to the next crop on the

land. Another benefit is through adaptation because pulse crops can tolerate some drought stress slightly better than other crops. Pulses provide other advantages, like leaving residual nitrogen in the soil for the next crop in rotation.

With this terrific sustainability contribution that pulses provide to the farm, the pulse industry under Pulse Canada, has leveraged this message into a broader initiatives. Pulse Canada is engaged as an affiliate member with the *Sustainable Agriculture Initiative* platform – the only global food industry sustainable platform for agriculture. Growers from across Canada have participated in meetings where they can engage global food companies like Unilever, McDonalds, and General Mills about sustainable initiatives. By interacting with this organization, growers learn what types of market demands will be placed into the value chain and they can better prepare for the future. They can also give a perspective to the companies about the implications of sustainability schemes.

In 2016, Alberta Pulse Growers has an opportunity to share the sustainability message around pulse crops through a collection of messages celebrating the International Year of Pulses. Declared by the United Nations, International Year of Pulses will celebrate pulse crops and their contributions to a variety of areas including food security, health, nutrition and food innovation, market access and stability, creating awareness, production and sustainability.

So while the world deals with the challenges around population increases, land pressures, and demands on water and biodiversity, sustainability is an important solution and the pulse industry is well positioned. So why do pulse growers care? Because they can make a difference.

**For more information:**

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