

Implementing the Alberta Wetland Policy: Landowner Opportunities

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Society is Beginning to See the Value of Ecosystem Services (ES), particularly:

- Water quality improvements
- Flood and drought management
- Carbon sequestration and climate adaptation
- Infrastructure management (roads, bridges and culverts)
- Biodiversity

These are all ES provided by wetlands and grasslands.



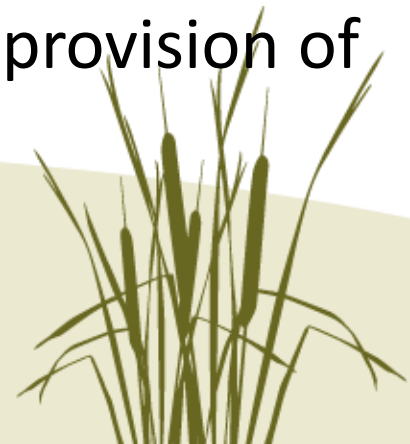
Alberta Wetland Policy

- Provides landowner payments for voluntary wetland restoration projects.
 - Via DUC Wetland Restoration Program.
- The Alberta Wetland Policy is the first policy to achieve a conservation offset market achieving true additionality for wetland objectives.
- Voluntary wetland restoration projects benefit all of society through the provision ecosystem services.



DUC Wetland Restoration Program

- DUC's Wetland restoration program achieves true additionality of wetlands:
 - Advances PHJV and Provincial wetland objectives.
- Pay landowners for voluntary wetland restoration projects:
 - Financial benefits
 - Producer benefits
 - Forage production
 - Stock water for livestock
 - On farm water management
- All DUC programs reward landowners for the provision of ecosystem services.



Wetland Restoration Lease Program



Wetland Restoration Lease Program

Wetlands are more than sloughs
Sloughs, marshes, ponds, field water. Wetlands are areas that hold water either temporarily or permanently. Some wetlands hold water year-round while others hold water for one or two months.

What is wetland restoration
Wetland restoration re-establishes small ponds and sloughs using methods like plugging ditches with earthen plugs or dams. DUC focuses on complexes of small sloughs that are typically 1/2 to 2 acres in size on a broader landscape.

DUC's Wetland Restoration Lease program
DUC compensates landowners based on current fair market value for restored wetland areas under a 10-year lease. As part of DUC's program, restored wetland areas stay under the management of the landowner. These areas may be hayed or grazed but they cannot be drained, altered or tilled during the term of the agreement. DUC's lease pays landowners significant compensation for this restriction.

Financial benefits
The program lease provides an upfront payment followed by a stream of 10 annual payments. Payments are based on current land values in the area and on the surveyed area of restored wetlands. DUC completes all the wetland restoration construction at no cost to you.
Landowners and cattle producers who have drained wetlands on grazing lands are often a very good fit for this program.
Farmers should consider this program as a partial source of financing for new land.

Starting the process
The first step is for DUC to complete a aerial photography assessment using current and historic photography to determine the presence and/or absence of wetlands and the presence of linear ditch works. If the initial assessment is positive, DUC undertakes field inspections to verify the presence and areas of drained wetlands which serves as the basis for lease agreement negotiations.
DUC will consider lands that have been drained or partially drained for the program.

Environmental benefits
Restored wetlands provide the following environmental benefits and services:
- greater biodiversity (waterfowl, wildlife, vegetation, etc.)
- carbon storage
- watershed flood & drought protection
- improved water quality through phosphorous and nitrogen sequestration

The wetland restoration lease program is a significant financial opportunity that landowners should consider for their land & for their future.

For more information, contact:
Ducks Unlimited Canada
1 866 479 3825

Ducks Unlimited Canada
Conserving Canada's Wetlands
ducks.ca

- **10 year term “new”**
- Restored wetland area must be **unaltered** (no tillage, no drainage, no infilling) – *can graze/hay no need to fence out*
- Land owner payment based on **appraised fair market value** of area land
- DUC total landowner compensation based on the **“restored area”**
- 50% of payment upfront after restoration is complete & 50% built into NPV stream of annual payments





Wetland Restoration Lease Program: Example

- Wetland Restoration (WR)
- Two Types of Wetlands – Ditch Plugs and Engineered.
- Restored 2 basins 46.4 acres
- Compensation = \$3000 per acre
- Pay producer **\$139,200**
- **\$69,600** upfront payment
- Remainder is split over 10 annual payments = \$6,960 per year (\$150 per acre)

Total Area Under Agreement = 46.4 acres



Legend

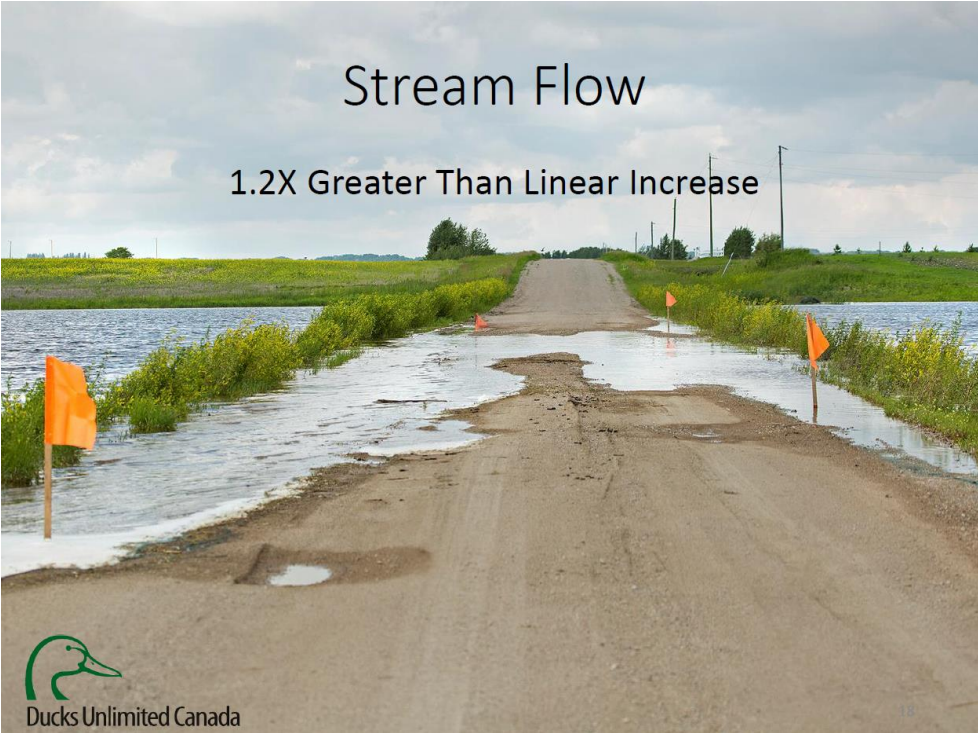
-  Wetland - Ditch Plug - 1.70 acres
-  Wetland - Engineered - 44.70 acres



Wetland Restoration in Municipalities

Stream Flow

1.2X Greater Than Linear Increase



- Reduces impacts to municipal infrastructure
 - Roads
 - Bridges
 - Culverts
- Wetlands provide “natural green infrastructure” for municipalities.
- Wetlands store water and release it slowly into the watershed.



DUC Wetland Restoration Achievements

2005 – Present:

- 184 Projects
- 5700 acres of wetlands restored in Alberta:
 - 71 voluntary wetland projects on private land:
 - 2,090 acres of wetland restoration.
 - 1325 acres of protected wetlands.
 - 4550 acres of uplands protected.
 - 590 acres of upland restoration.
- WRRP restored additional 1413 acres of wetlands in Southern Alberta.



Other DUC Achievements

Upland Restoration: Forage Program

- Partnership Between DUC and CPS.
- The program offers eligible producers \$100 for every 50 lb bag of forage crop that they buy and seed on their land.
- Helps producers manage their grasslands in a way that generates a sustainable source of forage and water for livestock.
- There are no restrictions associated with haying or grazing.



Get **\$100** per **50 lb** bag back on forage seed from **CPS & DUC**

Send your herd to the **green side** with the **2016 Forage Program** offered by **Crop Production Services (CPS)** and **Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC)**

As someone who is grounded in agriculture, you know that forage crops are an important part of sound land management practices. Forage crops and grassland provide sustainable grazing sources for livestock and offer diversity in crop rotations. They also help retain natural land function by protecting against erosion and retaining nutrient values.

The **2016 Forage Program** helps conservation-minded producers, like you, with the cost of planting forages so that you can enhance your grazing options, improve your bottom line, and add to your land's natural value. The program includes the extensive line-up of Proven® Seed forage varieties.



Proven® Seeds is a registered trademark of Crop Production Services (Canada) Inc. CPS CROP PRODUCTION SERVICES and Design is a registered trademark of Crop Production Services Inc.

Other DUC Achievements

Upland Restoration: Forage Program

- 7 year program,
- 401 Private landowner partners,
- 56,000 acres of uplands restored.



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Challenges



WETLAND LOSS

**In Alberta
approximately 64% of
wetlands have been lost
in the settled area
(white zone).**

**Losses continue at
about 0.5% annually.**

**Comparatively, 0.4% of
the Amazon rainforest is
lost annually.**



Challenges

Prairie Pothole Region

- Over the last 10 years in the Prairie Pothole Region of Canada ...
- We have lost, on average, 80 acres per day
- We have restored, on average, 14 acres per day ...

That means that for every acre we restore

We lose 5.7 acres



Challenges and Opportunities

- Need more emphasis on wetland avoidance.
- Assurance that all wetland impacts are subject to approvals.
 - **Stop unmitigated losses.**
- If all wetland impacts were mitigated we would achieve the Government of Alberta's desired 3:1 midpoint ratio.
- Private landowner uptake, have financial opportunities available but need landowners to be aware and utilize them.



Challenges and Opportunities

- Rural agricultural landowners are the primary beneficiaries of the Alberta Wetland Policy.
- Virtually all mitigation dollars are paid to rural agricultural landowners.



Thanks!

Questions?

