



**Water & Waste Policy Branch**  
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September 2, 2020

Standing Policy Committee on Utilities and Corporate Services  
The City of Calgary  
PO Box 2100, Station M  
Calgary, AB, T2T 2M5

**Subject: City of Calgary Draft Source Water Protection Policy**

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of Alberta Environment and Parks, I wish to express support for the City of Calgary's draft Source Water Protection Policy. The draft policy demonstrates the City's commitment towards managing source water, including ensuring the provision of quality drinking water to the public. I believe the draft policy will help achieve the foundational goals of Alberta's *Water for Life Strategy*.

Albertans expect high quality drinking water, and each level of government has a role to play to ensure our communities have that access. As the first line of defence to proactively protecting drinking water and aquatic ecosystems from contamination and other risks, source water protection is essential to providing Albertans with safe, secure drinking water and reliable quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.

Developing and implementing source water protection efforts in Alberta is a priority and requires the collaborative efforts and commitment of a wide range of participants. I applaud the City and its efforts to develop the draft policy. Our department appreciates your commitment to our shared goals of protecting the sources of drinking water in Alberta

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read "Heather von Hauff".

Heather von Hauff  
Executive Director  
Water & Waste Policy Branch



August 28, 2020

Standing Policy Committee on Utilities and Corporate Services  
The City of Calgary  
PO Box 2100, Station M Calgary, AB, T2T 2M5

**RE: City of Calgary Source Water Protection Policy**

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of the Alberta Water Council (AWC), I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the Source Water Protection Policy that is being presented to you on September 16, 2020.

The AWC is a multi-stakeholder partnership that provides leadership, expertise, and sector knowledge to engage and empower industry, non-governmental organizations, and governments to achieve the outcomes of the *Water for Life* strategy. The City of Calgary (Calgary) has been an active member of the AWC since our inception in 2004, participating on the board of directors and on project teams working to address provincial-scale water management issues, and we appreciate your ongoing support.

Source water protection is a critical component of an integrated water management approach that supports clean, safe, drinking water; healthy aquatic ecosystems and recreation opportunities; and reliable water supplies for commercial and industrial activity. Protecting Calgary's drinking water at its source in the Bow and Elbow watersheds is critical for ensuring high quality drinking water is maintained for Calgary and other downstream communities that also depend on the rivers.

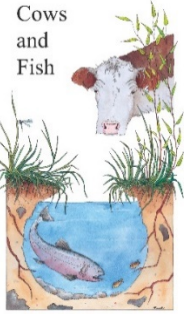
The new Policy is an important, and leading-edge tool, to support continued progress on future water security, and integrated watershed management. It helps ensure that watershed protection is an early consideration in the planning process by highlighting vulnerable areas that must be safeguarded and ensuring that water quality impacts are understood and mitigated. This will lead to improved and integrated watershed and land use outcomes for Calgary and the region.

Investing in source water protection reduces risks to future water supply and enables the City to continue delivering high quality drinking water, while avoiding expensive capital costs required to treat contaminated water.

Partnerships with the Province, regional municipalities, Indigenous Peoples and communities, and the private sector are critical for successful source water protection. The Policy, and continued work on the Source Water Protection Plan and Riparian Action Program, provides a unique opportunity to demonstrate leadership in watershed management by working collaboratively to address source water risks.

Sincerely,

Andre Asselin  
Executive Director



# Cows and Fish

Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society

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September 1, 2020

Standing Policy Committee on Utilities and Corporate Services  
The City of Calgary  
PO Box 2100, Station M  
Calgary, AB, T2T 2M5  
Via email to: [Jen.Pouliotte@calgary.ca](mailto:Jen.Pouliotte@calgary.ca)

RE: City of Calgary, Source Water Protection Policy

Dear Members of the Standing Policy Committee on Utilities and Corporate Services,

The Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society (Cows and Fish) is pleased to provide this letter in support of The City of Calgary's Source Water Protection Policy.

Now more than ever, strategic, long-term efforts to safeguard Calgary's drinking water supply are a high priority. Increasing land use development pressures and population growth, coupled with climate change risks are a concern to water security. As such, Calgary's Source Water Protection Policy, a pro-active, innovative and collaborative approach to integrating land and water management is key in addressing this challenge. We very much appreciate that the policy highlights goals for protecting source watersheds through improved land use planning, innovative stormwater management techniques, leveraging key partnerships for risk mitigation, and community involvement in education and research. Importantly, the policy also has a focus on promoting environmental stewardship and conservation in our source watersheds—a message that is core to our work. The City's Policy represents an important commitment under Alberta's South Saskatchewan Regional Plan toward enhancing integrated watershed management and building sustainable communities. In our work with the City, we see that the Policy, in combination with The City's Riparian Action Program, the Bioengineering Education and Demonstration Project and ongoing efforts to update Calgary's Stormwater Management Strategy, The City of Calgary is well positioned to become an integrated watershed management leader provincially and globally.

Our organization, The Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society (Cows and Fish) has been integrally involved with promoting riparian area stewardship in Alberta's watersheds for over two decades. We have a strong understanding of the key linkage between healthy landscapes and

maintenance of beneficial ecological goods and services, including those related to maintaining safe, secure and stable water supplies. We have forged strong relationships with watershed groups, private landowners, as well as municipal and provincial agencies across Alberta. We recently contributed to provincial efforts aimed at strengthening riparian area protections as part of the Alberta Water Council's *Riparian Land Conservation and Management Team* and contribution to the provincial "*Stepping Back from the Water: A Beneficial Management Practices Guide for New Development Near Water Bodies in Alberta's Settled Region*". We have also been involved directly with riparian health monitoring and community engagement efforts in Calgary since 2007.

We offer our strong support of Calgary's Source Water Protection Policy, and look forward to contributing, wherever possible, to aligned collaborative riparian projects with The City and our municipal, provincial, First Nations, private landowner and watershed group partners in the Bow River Basin. We commend The City for this proactive, collaborative and community based approach and see it as a vital component of long-term watershed management.

Sincerely,



Norine Ambrose, Executive Director  
Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society-"Cows and Fish"



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## Working towards a healthy Elbow River watershed

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Sep 3rd, 2020

To: The Standing Policy Committee on Utilities and Corporate Services, City of Calgary  
Attn: Cllr. Sutherland, Cllr. Demong, Cllr. Chahal, Cllr. Colley-Urquhart, Cllr. Farrell,  
Cllr. Keating, Cllr. Jones, Mayor Nenshi

### **Re: The City of Calgary Source Water Protection Policy**

We embrace this opportunity to speak to you and highlight the Elbow River watershed, as well as the alignments in our organizations' goals and The City of Calgary's objectives via the Source Water Protection Policy.

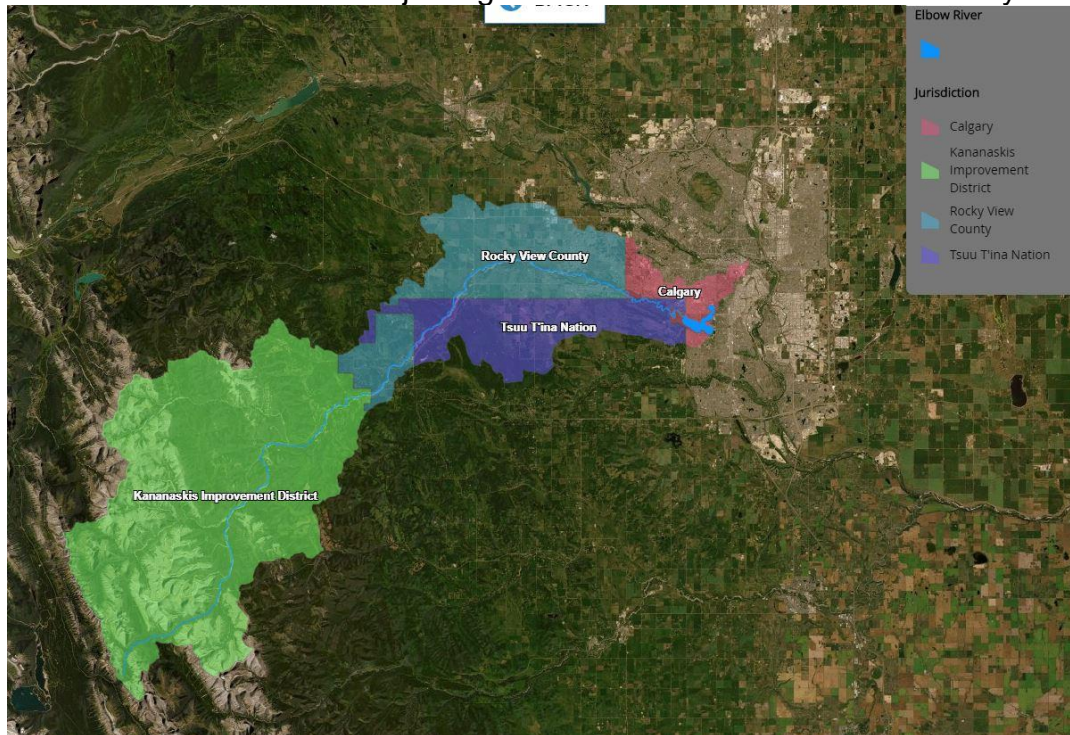
A bit about us; the Elbow River Watershed Partnership (ERWP) is a not-for-profit organization formed in 2004 to bring stakeholders together to protect and enhance water quality and quantity in the Elbow watershed, with the vision of working together for a healthy Elbow River Watershed. In addition to providing a forum for learning about watershed management and the land-water connection, we use local knowledge and scientific expertise to promote watershed management improvement through collaborative, targeted and cost-effective projects with stakeholders as partners.

The ERWP has produced a range of projects and programs over the years. I will highlight just one with you; our flagship program, the *Freshwater Field Study Program*. The Freshwater Field Study program is operated/administered in partnership with the Elbow River Watershed Partnership and Kananaskis Country, Environmental Education Program and couldn't happen without the support from sponsors and partners including **The City of Calgary**, Rocky View County, The Bow River Basin Council and volunteers for the Elbow Casino. Each year we hire new interns to deliver the Freshwater program. Partners that support training the new interns every year include; Alberta Parks, Kananaskis Region, Alberta Tomorrow, Bow River Basin Council, **The City of Calgary**, Colpitts Ranch, Elbow River Watershed Partnership, Glencoe Golf & Country Club, Glenbow Museum, Shell Canada Ltd., Spray Lake Sawmills, Trout Unlimited, Tsuut'ina Cultural Museum, University of Calgary, Earth Sciences. Over 20,000 students between grades 8 and 11 have participated in the program since its' inception in 2005. Over 2,370 volunteers and 273 schools participated in the program between 2005 and 2019. Most of these students are from Calgary while also including the surrounding community schools in the Bow and Elbow valleys (Bragg Creek, Redwood Meadows, Tsuut'ina, Springbank, Banff, Canmore, Exshaw, Stoney-Nakoda, Cochrane). Students participating in the Elbow program travel by bus to the Elbow Falls area, take water samples and observe the land uses. They stop 3-4 more times while moving downstream. Students usually notice changes (a degradation) in the water quality as they move downstream. This decrease in water quality is a result of the cumulative effects of land use impacts. After experiencing this Freshwater Field Study program, one of the take-home messages we hope the students conclude is '*what happens on the land, happens in the water*'.



A bit about the Elbow Watershed. The Elbow watershed crosses several jurisdictional boundaries and there are a range of stakeholders that either work, live or play in the watershed. Approximately 40-50% of Calgary's drinking water comes from the Elbow.

The Geography of the watershed - Starting upstream in the East Slopes of the Rocky Mountains, the Elbow waters start collecting high on Mt Rae, just above Elbow Lake. Moving downstream and relatively steeply downslope, the waters then gather from lands in Kananaskis Country, Rocky View County, Tsuu'tina Nation, then into the Glenmore Reservoir before joining the Bow River in the heart of the city.



The Elbow river is relatively short and steep, dropping more than 1km over its' 120km journey. This means changes upstream can be quickly seen as there is little room to attenuate sudden large quantities of water or to filter contaminants. This means the river is prone to both flood and drought as well as water quality contaminants. As we virtually move downstream, the activity level on the landscape increases and yet the landowners can be affected by what happens upstream as well as downstream. There are ways we can make the watershed more resilient to both flood and drought as well as minimizing water quality degradation through better land and water management and practices.

Source Water Protection Policy - Our organization understands The Policy builds on existing work to maintain water quality upstream of Calgary's water treatment plants. We anticipate this Policy document will provide strategic direction to The City of Calgary's Administration and Council to protect watershed health and resiliency, safeguard drinking water quality, and guide a more systematic and consistent application of source water protection in city planning processes and decision making. Our understanding is The Source Water Protection Plan and the Riparian Action Program are the two key implementation plans under the new Policy.

The Source Water Protection Plan aligns with all of these listed ERWP goals:



## Working towards a healthy Elbow River watershed

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- Encourage individuals and communities take responsibility to protect and enhance water quality and quantity in the Elbow River Watershed
- Encourage best water management and land use practices
- Support cooperation, coordination, and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders
- Minimize the negative impacts of land uses on water quality and quantity

Riparian Action Program – Our common goals to protect and restore riparian areas and to minimize riparian loss through land use changes also align well. Your protection within Calgary and our interest of protection within Calgary as well as upstream and through the entire watershed, together highlight how we can help protect the Elbow River together. The goals of the Riparian Action Program – minimize riparian loss, integrating bioengineering into bank restoration, monitoring riparian health, build capacity for riparian restoration. These are all actions that we also implement and encourage all Elbow watershed stakeholders to follow.

The ERWP is a collaborative organization that encourages open communication and dialogue. We represent a variety of stakeholders including different levels of government, municipalities, First Nations, industry, scientists, recreational organizations, other non-profit organizations, and individuals. With a range of interests in the watershed comes a variety of ideas and opportunities. We aim to focus on recommendations that are science based and that consider the overall health of the river, its' inhabitants and its' users, on a watershed scale.

In conclusion: We support proactive stewardship and management of the land in the Elbow River watershed. Activities or practices that maintain water quality and water quantity as well as biodiversity and riparian habitat in the Elbow watershed are steps in the right direction. We believe by implementing the Source Water Protection Policy, we are moving together on a common path that will help ensure a healthy Elbow River watershed.

We have heard folks from The City of Calgary Water Resources say '**every land use decision is a water management decision**'. We couldn't agree more with this statement, as highlighted in the Freshwater Field Study Program, we aim to share a similar message – "**what happens on the land, happens in the water**".

Again, thank you for the opportunity to talk to you today. We look forward to collaborating and ensuring these policies meet the objectives, for the benefit of all in the Elbow watershed, for future generations.

Respectfully,

Flora Giesbrecht

Coordinator  
Elbow River Watershed Partnership



Mayor and Members of Council of The City of Calgary

September 8, 2020

***Re: Support for The City of Calgary's Source Water Protection Policy***

Your Worship and Members of Council:

Leadership and vision portray the spirit and intent of The City of Calgary's *Source Water Protection Policy (SWPP)*. Sustainable cities and regions need sustainable water sources. We, the Ghost Watershed Alliance Society (GWAS), submit this letter in support of the proactive and holistic approach embodied in The City's proposed Policy.

***Background***

As a non-profit watershed stewardship group in the Calgary region, established under the Alberta *Water for Life Strategy* (2002), GWAS engages in science and research, ecosystem repair, advice and collaboration, and education and outreach in a significant portion of Calgary's source water landscape. We have on-the-ground experience and knowledge in the Ghost Watershed, a portion of the Bow River source watershed northwest of Calgary. For example, we are currently executing our *Water Monitoring Plan* and hosting a bioengineering workshop as practical actions to protect the region's water supply.

Over the past decade, we have partnered and collaborated with The City of Calgary, continuing to share the vision and values it holds for source water protection. We recently toured The City's watershed planning staff through portions of the Ghost Watershed, discussing our common concerns, opportunities for collaboration, and highlighting visible upstream threats to Calgary's safe drinking water. We would like to emphasize support for two key aspects of the Policy; (1) planning integration and (2) implementation.

***Planning Integration***

First, we strongly support The City's SWPP's drive towards the integration of land use and watershed planning and management in its source watersheds, from the provincial policy level down to the site-specific planning, approvals and operations level. Water does not recognize administrative boundaries. It flows through the region, making proactive collaboration across jurisdictions essential to ensuring a clean, reliable, resilient and adequate water supply.

We encourage The City to work closely with the Province of Alberta, municipalities, First Nations, watershed stewardship groups and other stakeholders. In particular, we would encourage a focus on sensitive areas in the upper portions of the source watershed. This multi-use area is under great pressure, despite functioning as a major source for the region's water. These lands essentially provide the natural water supply as well as serving as a filtering and storage system for the region. Historically established as Forest Reserves, these areas were recognized and conserved by early visionaries of the post-Confederation era because of their critical contribution to water security in the prairies. Today, we are heartened to see that The City's vision and actions through the SWPP echo the concerns and aspirations of our predecessors.





Specifically, we urge The City to continue to dialogue with the Province to advance:

- sub-regional plans stemming from the *South Saskatchewan Regional Plan* (i.e. footprint and recreational management plans);
- integration of wildfire risk mitigation and forest harvest practices to optimize water quality and stabilize water quantity (i.e. flood and drought mitigation); and
- wetland mapping and inventory creation in these sensitive watershed areas.

### ***Implementation***

Second, we strongly support strategies and actions necessary to implement the Policy including:

- conducting a Watershed Investment Study to investigate incentives for upstream stewardship as seen through a long-term lens;
- developing a source water education plan promoting collective responsibility; and
- providing guidance to post-secondary research in the source watersheds.

We believe that The City of Calgary is well positioned as a legitimate voice for safe drinking water in the region. The City must speak not just for Calgarians but also on behalf of the many citizens and businesses in surrounding regional municipalities who currently are (or may be in the future) recipients of Calgary's potable water services. In our view, The City has the responsibility and legitimacy to carry through with the goals of the Policy. Leadership in source water protection has been a hallmark of Calgary's historical efforts through the *Calgary Regional Planning Commission (CRPC)*, and the *Calgary Regional Partnership (CRP)*. And despite historical intermunicipal tensions, The City recognizes the need for proactive and successful collaboration with other jurisdictions and stakeholders; each contributing their unique expertise, capacity, leadership, and vision.

### ***Long term partners***

To conclude, please know that our watershed stewardship group strongly supports land use and watershed management integration as well as implementation of key actions in conjunction with other jurisdictions as intended by the City of Calgary's *Source Water Protection Policy*. We will continue our partnership with the City, willingly participating in dialogue and offering opportunities for City staff to be involved in on-the-ground activities in the Ghost Watershed, a portion of the Bow River source watershed.

GWAS applauds The City for its leadership, vision and determination as it looks west to its source watersheds and recognizes the critical role they play in the region's sustainability.

With respect,

Cal Hill  
President of GWAS



August 31, 2020

Standing Policy Committee on Utilities and Corporate Services  
The City of Calgary  
P.O. Box 2100, Stn. M  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada  
T2P 2M5

Standing Policy Committee on Utilities and Corporate Services;

Re: Source Water Protection Policy

*The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is Canada's leading national land conservation organization. Since 1962, NCC and our partners have helped to conserve 35 million acres of ecologically significant land nationwide, including 1.1 million acres in Alberta. The mission of NCC is to lead and inspire others to join us in creating a legacy for future generations by conserving important natural areas and biological diversity. NCC is a non-advocacy organization that partners with a variety of stakeholders, including multiple levels of government, corporations and organizations, foundations, and individuals.*

The Source Water Protection Policy (the Policy) proposed for the City of Calgary will serve to protect the Bow and Elbow River watersheds, preserving the many ecological services provided by these watersheds, including clean drinking water, flood and drought mitigation, as well as important riparian habitats and the species reliant upon them. The Policy identifies several aspects that align with the mission of NCC and have direct impacts on our work.

The Bow and Elbow River watersheds are under extreme pressure from population growth and land use changes that could result in the loss of thousands of acres of ecologically significant land and degradation of water systems. Preservation of vulnerable areas like waterbodies, floodplains, and riparian areas needs to be balanced with competing pressures to ensure long-term durability. The value of robust land use planning in achieving this balance cannot be overstated. It is critical for safeguarding vulnerable areas and ensures that environmental impacts are better understood and appropriately mitigated, now and into the future. Land use planning at a broader scale also permits integration of planning decisions across the entire watershed from the headwaters, to the tap, and beyond. The Policy would bolster land use planning throughout the watershed and promote collaboration across multiple perspectives and stakeholder groups.





Given the mission of NCC and the work we are already doing in the Bow and Elbow River watersheds, we are a natural partner for this initiative. To date, NCC has protected 23,214 acres of land within the Bow and Elbow River watersheds, through purchase of land and collaboration with landowners to establish conservation easements. NCC has a vested interest in the continued ecological health of these watersheds and actively stewards these lands to improve the health, resiliency, and function of the watersheds.

We understand that alongside the Policy there is discussion of developing a Watershed Investment Strategy focused on conserving key areas within the Bow and Elbow River watersheds. We are excited to discuss ideas, options, and collaborative conservation efforts that would place Calgary as a leader in conserving upstream habitat vital to the city's future. We are also able to leverage additional partnerships through our relationships with landowners in the communities, individual and corporate donors, and funding partners. Our work is currently supported through several major grant programs, including the Alberta Land Trust Grant Program (Alberta Environment and Parks), the Watershed Restoration and Resiliency Program (Alberta Environment and Parks), the Natural Habitat Conservation Program (Environment and Climate Change Canada), and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (United States Fish and Wildlife Service).

Implementation of the Policy in and of itself is a great step forward for the long-term protection of Calgary's source water and positions the city to respond to existing and future water challenges. The Policy would further NCC's goals to protect the land within the Bow and Elbow River watersheds. Every land use decision is a water management decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Lynch-Staunton".

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bryanne Aylward".

Tom Lynch-Staunton  
Regional Vice President  
Nature Conservancy of Canada | Alberta Region  
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September 8, 2020

Councilor Sutherland (Chair) and members of the Standing Policy Committee  
on Utilities and Corporate Services

**Re: Letter of Support for the City of Calgary's Source Water Protection Policy**

Dear Standing Policy Committee on UCS,

I am writing to provide support for the City's Source Water Protection Policy. We believe that the adoption of this policy is a critical step towards Calgary's long-term source water protection needs. Ultimately, the Policy will help to enhance important partnerships with organizations who have been independently working to protect Calgary's water for many years.

SALTS is a rancher-based land trust that has conserved 30,000 acres of natural landscapes in the Bow and Oldman River watersheds upstream of Calgary and Lethbridge. We work alongside other conservation organizations like Western Sky Land Trust, the Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, and Cows and Fish. Collectively, these organizations have done significant conservation work along the Bow and Elbow rivers, as well as their tributaries and associated wetlands.

By helping to keep the watersheds upstream of Calgary intact and healthy, these organizations have been directly supporting the City's quality and quantity of water. ***Healthy riparian areas, ranchlands, and wetlands provide many water services including filtration, storage, and slowing of runoff.*** This has become increasingly important as development continues west of Calgary, continually eroding these ecosystem services. Water from natural landscapes is of course much easier and less costly to treat than water running through residential developments or landscapes fragmented with roads.

In addition, the conservation work in Calgary's source watersheds directly supports the City's Water Security Framework. By maintaining the landscape's water storage and runoff slowing abilities, lands to the west of the City will continue to support drought and flood resiliency. If developed, they may instead compound these difficult events in the future.

With a Source Water Protection Policy in place, organizations like SALTS can see a role for themselves in helping to safeguard Calgary's drinking water. This will create the opportunity for us to partner with the City and ensure that our projects maximize their benefit when it comes to Calgary's water.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Justin Thompson", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Justin Thompson  
Executive Director

Southern Alberta Land Trust Society  
ISC: UNRESTRICTED



## Western Sky Land Trust

Conserving Our Sense of Place

August 28, 2020

### Founding Member

David Bissett

Standing Policy Committee on Utilities and Corporate Services

### Board of Directors

The City of Calgary  
PO Box 2100, Station M  
Calgary, AB, T2T 2M5

Wade Hawkins, Chair

Spencer Shepherd, Vice-Chair

Dear Committee Members,

Barb Feit, Treasurer

This letter is an expression of support for the Source Water Protection Policy and Watershed Investment Strategy and Riparian Action Program. The proposed program to develop a watershed investment strategy through land acquisition is well designed and will certainly be effective in its stated objective. Simply put, once implemented, this policy will effectively protect a critical resource for the City of Calgary: clean water.

Jeff Curran

Bruce Kendall

Ann Lewis Luppino

Hilary McMeekin

### Advisory Committee

Gordon Brown

Western Sky is supportive of the program's strategy and implementation process to protect watersheds and riparian areas, as this work is congruent with our mission and approach to voluntary conservation. Keeping inappropriate development away from river corridors is fundamental to source water protection. Western Sky is focused on the conservation of watershed lands as they are crucial to the quality and quantity of water available to humans and wildlife alike. Natural riparian areas are like recharge zones for groundwater, replenishing an essential source of drinking water. These key watersheds also provide natural resiliency against floods and drought.

Don Douglas

Alan Harvie

Jack Nodwell

Western Sky was established in 2005 to conserve open space and natural areas in the Calgary region. We created a well regarded and successful program called the Bow & Beyond Initiative, which is focused on the conservation of watershed lands along the Bow, Elbow, Highwood, Sheep and Jumping Pound Rivers. This multi-year landowner engagement program has resulted in the conservation of 23,000 acres of watershed lands and we are still going strong with this initiative.

Jean LeSourd

Our area of operation has expanded to all of southern Alberta, with active landowner outreach and projects upstream of Calgary along the

#### Western Sky Land Trust

Spring Gardens - Building D

861 – 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE

Mail Code # 64 PO Box 2100, Stn. M · Calgary, AB · T2P 2M5

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Bow, Elbow, Jumping Pound and Ghost rivers as well as in the Nose Creek catch basin and Beddington Creek areas. All of the riparian lands and neighbouring communities have relevance to Calgary's source water protection plans.

Furthermore, actioning the Bow & Beyond program has given us an excellent knowledge base and familiarity with these landowner communities and provided an opportunity for successful partnerships with landowners, community groups and NGOs. This successful landowner outreach is slated to continue into 2023.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our support for the source water protection policy that will ensure clean water for Calgarians now and generations to come.

Sincerely,



Max Fritz  
Executive Director



Wade Hawkins  
Board Chair  
Western Sky Land Trust