

Attachment C: Additional information you would like to share with Council

The Committee provides this additional information based on a recent review of the City Parks 2020 Habitat Restoration Program Update and a March 2021 presentation on Environmentally Significant Areas Loss, and is informed by the BiodiverCity Strategic Plan – Concordance with BiodiverCity Action Plan - Five Year Review that was conducted by the Committee from Q4 2020 – Q1 2021.

Restoration

- Restoration often occurs opportunistically on lands managed by Parks, Transportation, and Water Services
- Calgary Parks has begun assessing Habitat Condition Rating within City Parks which will identify and prioritize parks in need of restoration in the future
- Habitat being restored may not be in the context of priority habitats for biodiversity
- Currently the city is not on track to meet the 20% target of restoration of open spaces by 2025 (832 ha)
- The city is on track to meet about half of this target but would need significant additional capital funds as well as additional staffing to complete the work based upon the amount of area that still needs to be restored or is in progress, and the average cost for restoration (source: Urban Conservation)

Considerations:

- Greater investment in Parks to meet 2025 restoration target
- Build a cross-corporate restoration program
- Set either an achievable restoration target and/or extend target deadline

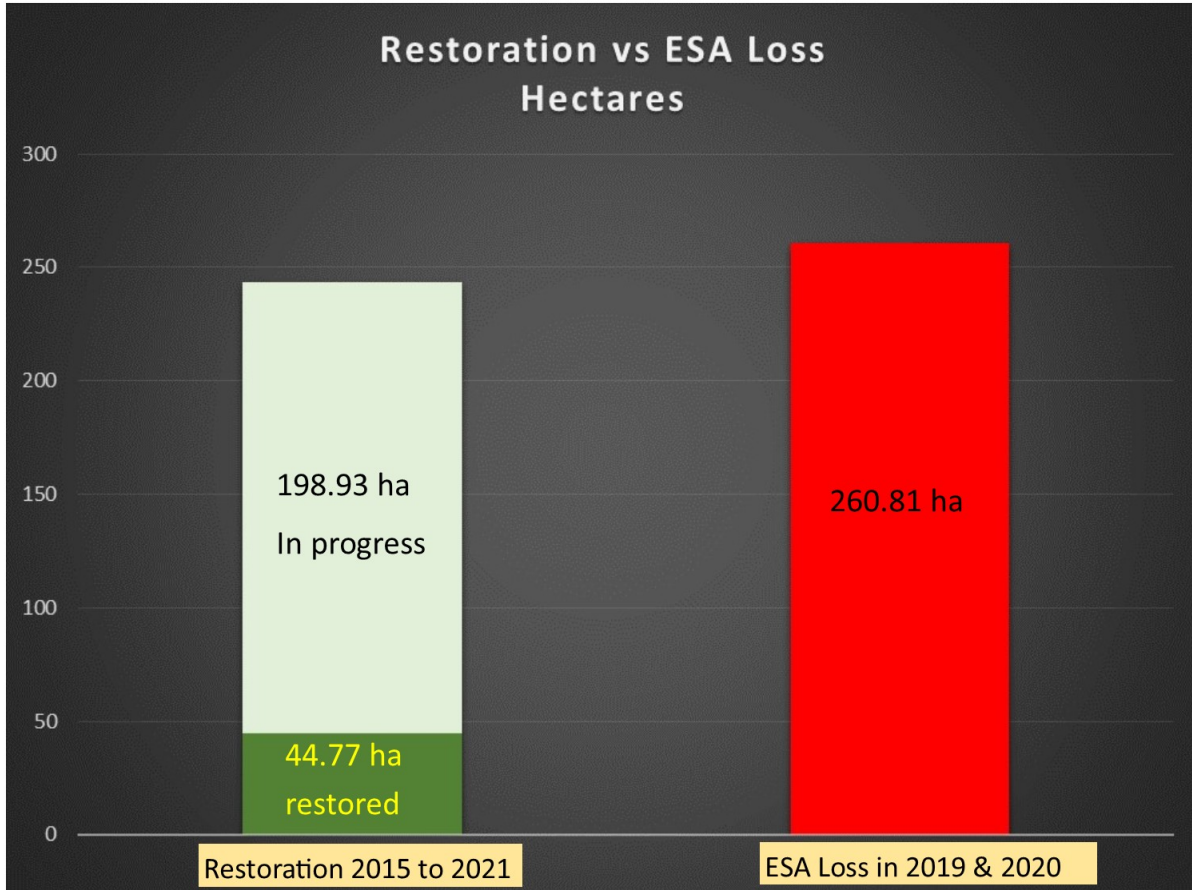


Figure 1. Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Lost in 2 years compared to amount restored or restoration in progress over last 5 years

Although restoration can contribute to biodiversity, it is expensive (on average \$35,000/ha to restore) and the area restored is likely not equivalent habitat for biodiversity to that found in environmentally sensitive areas. Ultimately, it is far less expensive to protect land than it is to restore it.

Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Loss

In 2019, the City of Calgary lost about 58% of ESA that has been identified in Biophysical Impact Assessments. This is a net loss when the loss is compared to the gains made with restoration. Ideally, all ESA should be protected but this is not always possible due to land use needs for development.

There are many policies and guidelines intended to preserve biodiversity within the City of Calgary but few mechanisms to achieve these goals:

- Municipal Reserve
- Environmental Reserve Easement to prevent pollution or ensure public access (mostly undevelopable land)
- Conservation reserve (buy ESA at market rate)
- Naturalized Municipal Reserve (restoration)

Considerations:

- Use or develop additional mechanisms or utilize current mechanisms to a greater extent to preserve ESA (e.g. conservation reserve, environmental reserve easements, land trusts, ecological gifts, Claim by the Crown)
- Prioritize preserving ESA that represents particularly biodiverse or rare ecosystems and habitats within the City of Calgary and prioritize areas that have been identified as important in the Ecological Network such as important connectivity corridors, shelterbelts and steppingstones between core areas.
- Develop a comprehensive spatial map of known and potential ESAs and existing rare habitats
- Track the categories of ESA and habitats that are being lost
- Set targets for protecting ESA and priority habitats (not per development but a city-wide target)

Underway

- On-going monitoring of ESA loss
- Updating ESA criteria to make ESA designation more robust

Loss of Urban Forest

While the BAC supports densification within the city rather than developing undeveloped lands, the city is losing significant areas of the urban forest annually through redevelopment. This leads to a loss of biodiversity and climate resiliency.

- Recommend that Council establish a biodiversity/climate resiliency fund that is funded through a fee on all redevelopment applications that can be used for targeted conservation and restoration

Additional Recommendations to Council in support of ecoliteracy

- Recommend supporting the Bird Friendly City Designation (<https://naturecanada.ca/bfc/>)
- Establish City of Calgary Biodiversity Day annually on May 22nd in alignment with International Day for Biological Diversity (<https://www.cbd.int/idb/>)
- Support the City Nature Challenge Calgary a competition between cities around the world which encourages citizens to document the biodiversity within their city (<https://citynatureyyc.ca/>)
- Update City of Calgary website to communicate biodiversity messaging to citizens and to highlight the work and recommendations of the BAC