

Visioning Background Report: Goals and Objectives

Review of Conservation Plans

May 2006



VISIONING BACKGROUND SUMMARY REPORT: Goals and Objectives

1. Introduction

The City of Edmonton, through the Office of Natural Areas, is in the process of developing an Integrated Natural Areas Conservation Plan. The main purpose of this plan is to integrate conservation planning of natural areas found within the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System and those found above the river valley in the Table lands and other mature areas of the city. Ultimately, this plan will provide a vision and implementation strategy for the protection of natural areas in the City of Edmonton.

A critical component of this plan is the development of a conservation vision. This visioning component will involve community consultation and will result in the creation of a coordinated conservation vision for Edmonton to be articulated by City Council, stakeholders, City staff and citizens. It will also guide the establishment of guiding principles, goals and objectives.

This report is meant to provide background information on higher level goals/objectives of natural area conservation so as to guide the public participation of the visioning component. By reviewing existing nature conservation plans from around the world and cataloguing their higher level goals and objectives, this report aims to provide a simple framework from which to start the discussion and selection of goals and objectives for the City of Edmonton's Integrated Natural Areas Conservation Plan. A total of 49 plans were examined and a total of 553 goals/objectives were collected. From these goals/objectives, 28 categories falling into 8 themes were identified.

2. Strategic Planning Terminology

Strategic planning consists of the process of developing strategies to reach a defined objective. In other words, it defines where an organization wants to be and what it needs to do to get there. Ultimately, it facilitates good management. Within the context of developing a natural areas conservation plan, strategic planning involves defining what is important to protect and determining a suitable approach to protect it.

The basic steps of strategic planning are:

1. Identify the purpose
2. Select the goals/objectives
3. Identify specific approaches or strategies to reach each goal
4. Identify specific actions to implement each strategy
5. Monitor and update the plan

The visioning component for Edmonton's Integrated Conservation Plan primarily involves step 2 although steps 1 and 3 are related.

It is important to understand the differences between goals, objectives and strategies. The following definitions have been chosen to represent the terms to be used in this visioning process:

- A **Goal** is a general, qualitative, long-range description of desired outcomes, and provides a basis for allocation of resources and a clear direction for agency action.
- An **Objective** is a specific, measurable, time-certain statement of what will be done to achieve a goal.
- A **Strategy** describes a course of action (method, tool) that will be implemented to achieve an objective.

Different plans use different terminology for goals. The terms aim, goal and objective are often used interchangeably. In this report, goals and objectives were collected regardless of the terminology used in the document. From this point, mention of goals includes objectives as well. Strategies were excluded even if they were called goals or objectives within the document.

3. Approach

The following is a summary of the approach used to collect and sort goals from existing conservation plans.

1. Internet search for plans that were primarily concerned with protecting natural areas and contained higher level objectives and goals.
2. Information extraction and collation of goals/objectives
3. Sorting process determining categories and themes
4. Tabulation and pattern analysis

Each document was given a code, based on geographic region (referred to as region) and jurisdictional level (referred to as level). These codes are as follows:

AUS: Australia, including the south pacific region.

EU: Europe, excluding the United Kingdom but including the Republic of Ireland

INT: International conventions. Only RAMSAR and the Convention on Biodiversity were used for this report.

NA: North America

UK: United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland.

Level Codes:

M = Multi-jurisdictional: Includes international, national and provincial/state levels.

R = Regional: Includes plans below M level and includes plans covering entire watersheds, districts or metropolitan areas.

L = Local: All of these plans are at the lowest level of government which includes individual counties, cities and boroughs.

Table 1 shows which plans were examined.

Table 1: List of plans examined in this report

Region Code	Level Code	Place/Organization	Document Title
AUS1	M	South East Queensland, Australia	Regional Nature Conservation Strategy for South East Queensland 2003-2008
AUS2	L	Brimbank, Australia	Guidelines for Protecting, Enhancing and Managing Significant Natural Assets
AUS3	M	Pacific Islands Region	Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region, 2003-2007
AUS4	M	Australian Capital Territory	The A.C.T. Nature Conservation Strategy
AUS5	L	Penrith, Australia	Draft Plan for Management: Jamison Creek Riparian Corridor
EU1	L	North Tipperary, Ireland	North Tipperary Heritage Plan 2004-2008
EU2	L	County Westmeath, Ireland	Heritage Plan
EU3	L	County Clare, Ireland	County Clare Heritage Plan 2003-2007
EU4	M	Coillte Teoranta, Ireland	Coillte's Nature Conservation Policy
EU5	M	Council of Europe	Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy
INT1	M	Ramsar Convention	The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008
INT2	M	Convention on Biological Diversity	Strategic Plan
NA1	R	Oak Ridges Moraine Area, ON, Canada	Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan
NA3	R	Islands Trust Fund, BC, Canada	Regional Conservation Plan 2005-2010
NA4	L	Land Trust of Napa County, CA, USA	Conservation Vision 2010: A map to the future
NA5	M	North American Wetlands Conservation Council, Canada	A Wetland Conservation Vision for Canada
NA6	L	City of Hamilton, ON, Canada	Draft Official Plan Policies for Natural Heritage
NA7	R	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, ON, Canada	Draft Toronto and Region Terrestrial Natural Heritage System Strategy
NA8	R	Schuylkill Watershed, Pennsylvania, USA	Schuylkill Watershed Conservation Plan
NA9	L	Davis, California, USA	Habitat, Wildlife and Natural Areas in Davis General Plan
NA10	L	Kendall County, Illinois, USA	Open Spaces and Natural Areas Plan
NA11	R	Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority, ON, Canada	Strategic Plan
NA12	L	Montpelier, Vermont, USA	2002-2005 Strategic Plan
NA13	R	Squam Lake, New Hampshire, USA	SLCS Strategic Plan
NA14	R	Chattooga River Watershed, USA	The Chattooga Conservation Plan
NA15	R	Conservation Halton, ON, Canada	Healthy Watershed Plan
NA16	M	Natural Resources Conservation Service, USA	Productive Lands, Healthy Environment – NRCS Strategic Plan

Region Code	Level Code	Place/Organization	Document Title
NA17	R	Greater Vancouver Regional District, BC, Canada	Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the Greater Vancouver Region
NA18	L	San Diego County, CA, USA	Final Multiple species Conservation Program MSCP Plan
NA19	L	Surrey, BC, Canada	Overview of the Natural Areas Management Plan: Strategic Directions
NA20	L	Loveland, CO, USA	Open Lands Plan
NA21	L	Eugene, OR, USA	West Eugene Wetlands Plan
UK1	L	City of Nottingham, England	Nature Conservation Strategy for the City of Nottingham 2000-2005
UK2	L	City of Derby, England	Revised Derby Nature Conservation Strategy August 2005 - Draft
UK3	L	City of Westminster, England	A Nature Conservation Strategy for Westminster
UK4	L	London Borough of Croydon, England	Nature Conservation Strategy, Supplementary Planning Guidance No. 5
UK5	R	Ashfield District, England	Ashfield District Council Nature Conservation Strategy – Consultative Draft July 2003
UK6	R	Mid Bedfordshire, England	Chapter 5: Nature Conservation <u>from</u> The Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan: First Review
UK7	L	Canterbury, England	Canterbury City Council Nature Conservation Strategy
UK8	L	Craigavon Borough, Northern Ireland	Craigavon Nature Conservation Strategy
UK9	L	Hastings Borough,	Hastings Urban Nature Conservation Strategy
UK10	L	Hull City (Kingston upon Hull), England	Hull City Council Nature Conservation Strategy <u>from</u> Appendix B of the Hull Biodiversity Action Plan
UK11	L	Newport City (Casnewydd), Wales	A Nature Conservation Strategy for Newport City Council – Consultation Draft (August 2004)
UK12	M	Northern Ireland	Natural Heritage Strategic Plan 2003
UK13	L	Rushcliffe Borough, England	Rushcliffe Community Nature Strategy
UK14	L	Cardiff Harbour Authority, Wales	Conservation Strategy for Cardiff Bay
UK15	L	Congleton Borough, England	Nature Conservation Strategy
UK16	L	Sheffield, England	The Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy
UK17	L	Trafford, England	Nature Conservation Strategy and Action for Nature in Trafford

4. Findings

A total of 49 plans were used in this report. From these plans, a total of 553 goals were collected and sorted. Some goals fell into more than one category. In fact a couple of goals represented 3 or more categories. The total number of goals reflects this occurrence. In other words, goals that fell into more than one category were counted more than once. Fifty goals fell into more than one category.

From the sorting process, 28 categories emerged. These categories were then grouped into eight themes. Following is a description of the themes (**bold text**) and categories (underlined text).

Theme and Category Descriptions

1. **Public Awareness:** Involves raising awareness and understanding of nature conservation issues. Includes education, communication and access to information.

Awareness/Understanding: All goals in this category relate to increasing public awareness and understanding of nature conservation issues.

Communications: These goals involve producing communications such as newsletters, leaflets and brochures.

Education: These goals are specific to developing and implementing public education programs relating to nature conservation.

Information Access: These goals are specific to making information and databases accessible to the public.

2. **Involvement:** Involves participation in nature conservation including community involvement, partnerships and stewardships.

Community Involvement: All of these goals relate to involving the public in the protection, monitoring, use and enjoyment of natural areas. It does not include stewardship.

Partnerships: All goals in this category relate to partnerships and/or collaborations made with stakeholders. It does not include outreach and stewardship.

Stewardship: These goals relate to stewardship activities such as encouraging and supporting landowners in nature conservation efforts. It also includes goals that involve working with groups to manage and protect natural areas. Essentially all goals in this category relate to cooperation at all levels in stewardship activities.

3. **Planning:** Involves aspects of integrating nature conservation into planning at all levels. Includes development and financial issues.

Development Issues: Any goals involving nature conservation and development are found in this category. It includes development guidelines, mitigation requirements and balancing development and conservation.

Financial Issues: All goals in this category relate to financial capacity and management. It includes the development of financial incentives, preventing economic losses and managing funds.

Planning process: All of these goals relate to integrating nature conservation into the planning process other than directly into a nature conservation plan. It includes land use planning, master plans and other sector plans.

4. **Conservation Plan:** Involves the development and implementation of a nature conservation plan. Includes following higher level initiatives.

Framework: These goals involve developing the framework for a nature conservation plan. It includes the development of approaches, strategies, objectives and targets.

Higher Levels: These goals all relate specifically to the consideration and inclusion of higher level directives (e.g. Convention on Biodiversity).

Implementation: These goals all relate to implementing and monitoring conservation plans. It also deals with updating the plan with respect to changing priorities and recommendations.

5. **State of Natural Areas:** Involves the identification and monitoring of natural areas. Includes identification, classification, surveying and data management.

Data Management: These goals involve developing a framework for collecting data and the subsequent database establishment and management.

Identification: These goals involve identifying, mapping and classifying natural areas and conservation features.

Monitoring: These goals involve surveying and monitoring the state of identified natural areas.

6. **Protection of Natural Areas**: Involves the activities and issues associated with conserving natural areas and conservation features. Includes protection, management and increasing linkages and natural areas.

Biodiversity: These goals are all specific to protecting biodiversity and threatened species and habitats.

Ecological Network: All of the goals in this category specifically deal with the establishment and/or management of biological networks, linkages, connectivity and corridors.

Increasing Natural Areas: All of these goals relate to increasing the amount of natural areas protected, either in number or area. It includes acquisition, restoration and creation.

Natural Area Management: All of the goals in this category relate to management plans for publicly owned natural areas. It includes management of hedgerows, wetlands, riparian and agricultural lands. It excludes other types of management such as fire, pollution and pest management.

Other Management: These goals involve the management of issues that may affect natural areas. They include fire, pest, pollution, invasive species and wood harvesting.

Protection: These goals involve the protection, enhancement and conservation of natural areas, their values and integrity.

7. **Quality of Life**: Involves improving a community's quality of life through nature conservation. Includes attractiveness, access and property rights.

Access: These goals involve improving public access to natural areas and ensuring public safety.

Attractive Community: These goals involve improving the aesthetics, quality of life, sense of place and investment attractiveness of the community.

Property Rights: This goal is about balancing public interest in nature conservation with individual property rights

8. **Organization Excellence:** Involves being able to be the best at nature conservation. Includes leadership, scientific approaches and training.

Leadership: These goals deal specifically with the desire to be a leader in nature conservation initiatives.

Science: These goals relate to using good science, promoting research and optimizing technical and technological abilities.

Training: These goals relate to human resources and administrative issues. It includes the training of staff and volunteers.

The following table (Table 2) summarizes the most and least common categories and the most common themes represented by the proportion of the 49 plans that had at least one goal in each category or theme.

Table 2: Summary Table for Plans

		Plans	%
Top 5 Categories	1	Protection	75.5
	2	Awareness/Understanding Increasing Natural Areas	51.0
	3	Access Natural Area Management	40.8
	4	Planning Process	38.8
	5	Biodiversity	34.7
Bottom 5 Categories	1	Property Rights	2.0
	2	Leadership Other Management	8.2
	3	Communications	12.2
	4	Science Training	14.3
	5	Data Management	16.3
Top 3 Themes	1	Protection of Natural Areas	85.7
	2	Public Awareness	71.4
	3	Planning	67.3

The following figures (Figures 1 and 2) illustrate the patterns summarized in Table 2 as well as the proportions of the plans by all of the categories and themes.

Figure 1: The proportion of plans (out of 49) represented in each category

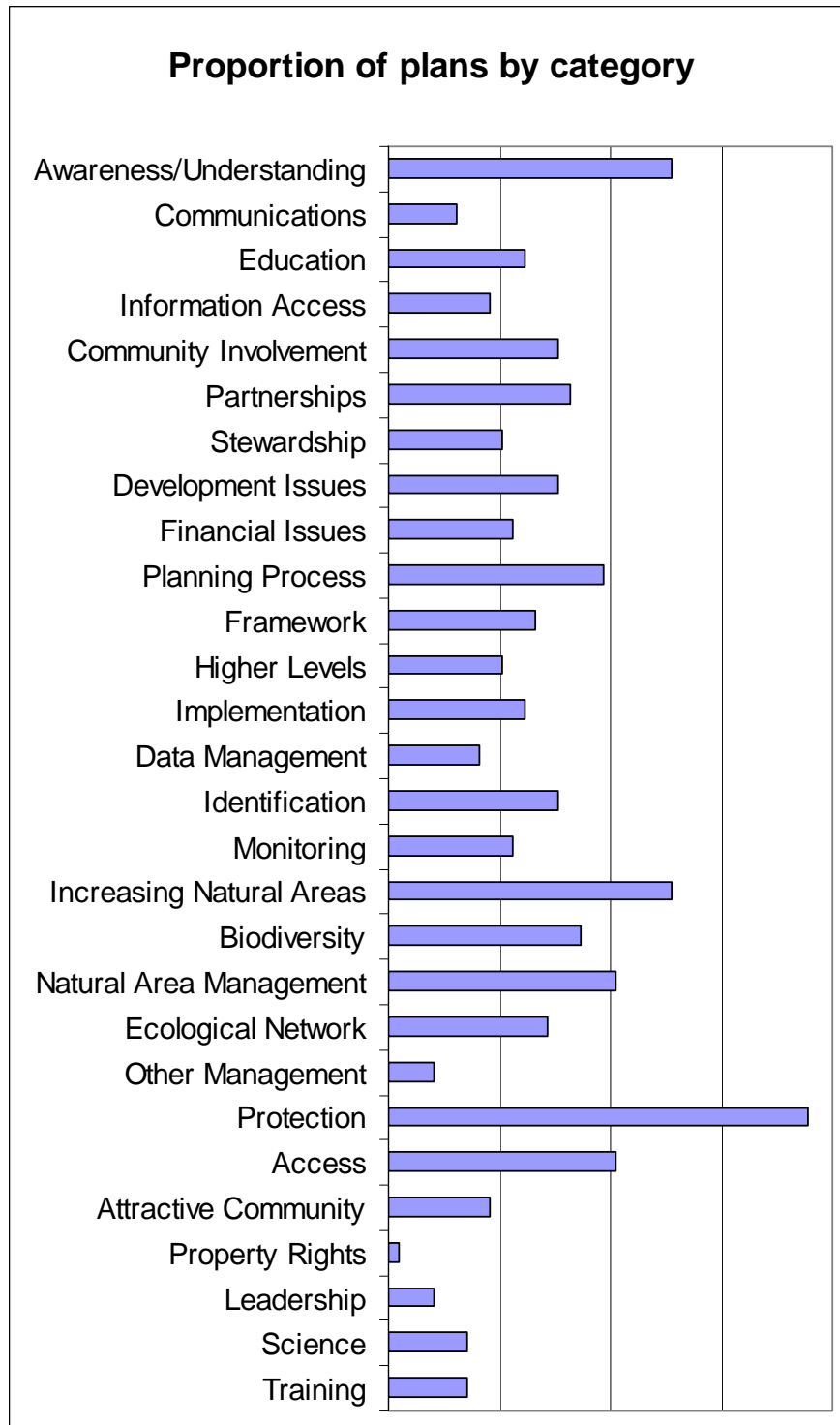
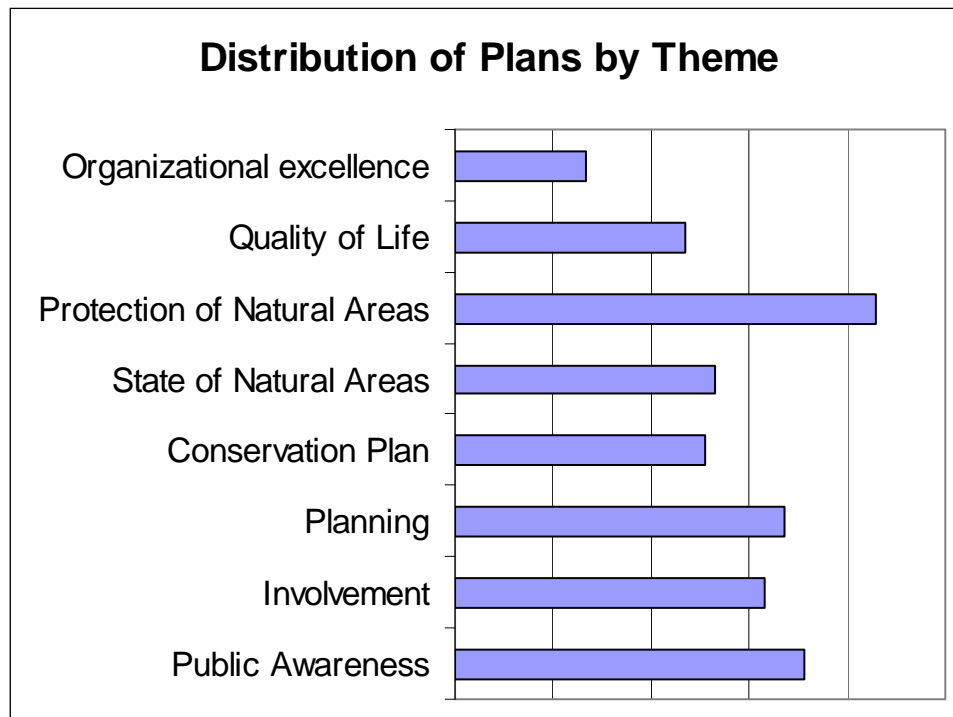


Figure 2: The proportion of plans (out of 49) represented in each theme



5. Recommendations and Conclusions:

The following recommendations and conclusions should be considered when using the findings from this report and for the development of the visioning component for Edmonton's Integrated Natural Areas Conservation Plan.

- The identification of eight themes and 28 categories lends itself well as a framework for goals and objectives. It may be possible to use the eight themes as goals and the 28 categories as objectives.
- Using the eight themes as higher level goals will be a strong starting point for public consultation.
- As for using the 28 categories as objectives, more caution should be used because they may not represent all of the nature conservation issues specific to Edmonton.
- In general, however, the categories do represent important issues and/or priorities for nature conservation.
- It is important to keep in mind that it may be desired to have some objectives to deal with specific types of habitats such as wetlands and riparian areas. The sorting process used in this report put goals relating to specific habitat types into broader topics such as protection.
- Also, goals relating to restoration, acquisition and creation were lumped together as means of increasing natural areas (either in size, quantity or quality). These activities are considerably different and may warrant individual objectives.

- The next step is to formulate a framework using the findings from this report in preparation for public consultation. It may be advantageous to select several goals from each category and make them more specific to Edmonton as examples of potential objectives.
- Overall, this report provides a basic framework from which to build the visioning component for Edmonton's Integrated Natural Areas Conservation Plan. By looking at plans from different regions of the world and from different levels of jurisdiction, this report is a comprehensive overview of natural areas conservation planning with respect to higher level goals and objectives.