



March 2006



PARKS & OPEN SPACES MASTER PLAN Approval Statement



Approval Statement

Leduc County Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan

Leduc County Council approves this Master Plan as a policy to guide future management of the County's Parks and Open Spaces.

Date: March 7th, 2006

Motion: #118-06

Council Members:

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Leduc County's Master Plan will guide future management of the County's Parks and Open Spaces.

What is a Master Plan?

The Master Plan is our map for the next 20 years. The Plan will guide us in managing the existing Parks and Open Spaces. For example, what Park facilities will be replaced, upgraded or expanded? Should we keep all of our existing Open Spaces?

The Draft Plan also guides where the County could build new Parks and the type of Open Spaces we want in the future. The report identifies potential new parks in the central and northwestern portions of the County. New Open Spaces will be acquired to provide connections between environmentally significant areas.

What are County Parks and Open Spaces?

Parks are lands owned by Leduc County that are managed for active recreation (picnicking, playgrounds, boat launches).

Open Spaces are undeveloped County lands with no facilities. These lands conserve natural features like shorelines or steep slopes. Some Open Spaces are lands held in reserve to provide locations for future recreation or other municipal services.

Vision for the Future

Vision statements are pictures of where we want to go that help lead our management.

Parks Vision

"People enjoying parks for fun, relaxation and quiet contemplation"

The goal of our Parks management will be to maintain the quality of life for residents and visitors by providing access to a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Open Spaces Vision

"Protected places providing the natural life support system for our community"

Management of Open Spaces will maintain environmental quality by protecting the natural environment for the benefit of existing and future generations.

Management of Existing Parks

Management of most of the County's existing Parks will focus on maintaining the facilities and services provided. Redevelopment of facilities will be required at some Parks to keep quality services. A few facilities and sites will be closed.

Centennial Park - a redevelopment plan will be prepared and implemented to improve existing facilities and provide new attractions.





Jubilee Park - The Park's facilities and services will be upgraded with an improved day use area/boat launch and redevelopment of the campground.

Mission Beach - the Day Use Park will be maintained. The summer boat launch will be relocated. The Campground will be permanently closed.

Sunnybrook Creek - the Park will be maintained as a day use rest stop and group use campground.

Genesee - a new park will be developed to provide picnicking and fishing opportunities. The historical heritage of the district will be presented.

Gilwood Boat Launch - the boat launch will be maintained and vehicle parking improved.

Wizard Lake West Boat Launch - the boat launch off Range Road 275 will be maintained as a local, year-round access to the lake.

Local Parks - Outdoor recreation facilities at local Community Halls and rural subdivisions will continue to be maintained in partnership with residents. Facilities at several sites will need to be upgraded to meet safety standards.

Plan for New Parks

New Parks will be planned in Leduc County to meet increasing demands for outdoor recreation facilities based on the following criteria.

Priority for County Residents

Emphasis on Day Use - facilities for activities like walking, picnicking, swimming, boating and fishing.

New Parks in Centre and Northwest - proposes locating new parks in the central and northwestern portions of the County.

Ensure Lake Access - Parks supported on all major lakes to provide public access to the shoreline and water if the lake is able to support more use.

Support North Saskatchewan River Valley Access - support carefully managed parks and facilities that provide access to the river and valley.

Areas of Interest for Future Parks

- North Saskatchewan River Valley
- Genesee
- North Pigeon Lake
- Rabbit Hill
- Cawes Lake
- Saunders Lake

Regional Coordination

Leduc County will work closely with the Province of Alberta, other municipalities, non-government organizations and the private sector to coordinate management of parks and outdoor recreation services.

Trails

At present, there are not many recreational trails in Leduc County, but there is tremendous interest.





Leduc County will provide new, nonmechanized trails in County Parks as it develops and redevelops them.

The County will assist other municipalities and trail organizations to develop trails where private landowner support is demonstrated.

Management of Existing Open Spaces

Open Spaces are undeveloped lands that protect the natural environment.

Environmental Reserves - will be left in natural condition and monitored. A volunteer stewardship program will be promoted.

Recreation Reserves - will be managed to allow future use as public recreation sites.

Shorelines - reserves along lakes and streams will be managed for public access and to protect adjacent water bodies.

New Open Spaces

New Open Spaces will be identified that protect natural features like flood plains, wildlife habitat, native vegetation and ecological linkages.

Leduc County may identify land for protection by utilizing land use planning and other tools.

The County will work closely with environmental agencies to support protection of additional Open Spaces in the County. Reserve lands in new subdivisions will be dedicated that protect the natural environment and secure lands for future recreation and utilities.

Coordination of Open Spaces Management

The County will work closely with other agencies to protect the following Open Spaces:

Coyote Lake - Nature Conservancy of Canada

Ministik Bird Sanctuary - Ducks Unlimited and Province of Alberta

Natural Areas - Province of Alberta

Beaverhills - adjacent municipalities, non-government organizations, Province of Alberta, Parks Canada

North Saskatchewan River Valley -River Valley Alliance, Province of Alberta, adjacent municipalities.

Genesee - work with Luscar Mines and Epcor to reclaim areas for wildlife habitat.

Implementation

Implementation of the Master Plan will span many years based on priorities and budget.





Priorities

• By 2010

Redevelop and repair existing County Parks

• By 2015

Continue redevelopment of existing parks

Plan for new Parks
Establish a new Park in central area of
County

• By 2025

Establish a new Park in northwest area of County

• Ongoing

Support initiatives to protect Open Spaces Work with partners to develop trails

Implementation Cost Estimates

	Planning/ Capital	New Operations
Redevelopment of Existing Parks	\$4,837,000	\$4,000/yr
Establishing New Parks	\$4,200,000	\$80,000/yr
Regional Coordination	\$200,000	\$40,000/yr
Management of Existing Open Spaces	\$65,000	\$40,000/yr
Establishing New Open Spaces	\$100,000	\$10,000/yr
Financial Sustainability	\$20,000	\$150,000/yr
Totals	\$9,422,000	\$324,000

Finances

Funding for existing and new Parks and Open Spaces could be provided by:

- User Fees
- Grants- continue to apply for grants from the provincial and federal governments.
- Regional Partnerships share funding responsibilities with other municipalities to support regional parks.
- Facility Life Cycle annual contributions to a Capital Reserve Fund to pay for replacement of facilities.
- Sale of Surplus Lands County lands that are surplus to current or anticipated needs could be sold.



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1.0 Introduction

Leduc County has been involved in the provision of public recreation services and protection of open spaces for decades. The County operates several major recreation sites like Jubilee Park on Wizard Lake and Centennial Park on Joseph Lake, as well as smaller sites like Sunnybrook Creek Park. The County owns a large number of open spaces that are municipal and environmental reserves along lake shorelines, stream courses, and in most of the rural, industrial and commercial subdivisions in the County.

Parks and Open Spaces within the County play an important role in maintaining the quality of life for residents. The opportunity for a family to go camping for the weekend, to go boating or fishing, or take a quiet walk along a stream all contribute to our sense of well being. The protection of natural open spaces provides habitat for wildlife, protects water quality, stabilizes steep slopes and maintains air quality which provides us with a healthy living environment.

As the County population continues to grow and new development in the Edmonton region expands, the County will face new challenges. Management of the existing parks and opens spaces and the addition of new lands and facilities will become increasingly important to ensure our continuing quality of life. The Parks and Opens Spaces Master Plan addresses these future challenges and opportunities.

1.1 Purpose of Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan

The Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan has been developed to provide comprehensive and integrated policy direction on the future management of the parks and open spaces owned by Leduc County. The plan addresses the role of existing sites and provides direction on potential additions to the County's system of parks and open spaces over the next 20 years.

The Master Plan forms part of the hierarchy of statutory and non-statutory plans that guide the County's Administration and elected officials in decision making. The Master Plan is a non-statutory plan that takes its overall direction from the Municipal Development Plan and County Business Plan. The Master Plan provides policy direction to guide County administration on management of the County's Park and Open Spaces. The Master Plan, in turn, will form the foundation of other more specific policies and plans for individual parks and programs (e.g. Jubilee Park Redevelopment Plan).

For the purposes of this planning study, Parks and Open Spaces are defined as follows:

Parks - are public outdoor recreation sites owned by Leduc County that are managed for high-intensity, active recreational uses. Recreation facilities are provided in the parks and may include picnic sites, boat launches, playgrounds and campgrounds.





Open Spaces - are County owned reserve lands that are generally undeveloped in order to conserve the underlying natural resources. The reserve lands may include forests, meadows, wetlands, lake shorelines, stream corridors, or steep slopes. Open spaces also include County reserve lands that have the potential to provide future recreation opportunities or municipal services.

This Master Plan study does <u>not</u> address facilities like arenas, recreation complexes or community halls that are the focus of the report *Leduc County Facility Development Plan Update 2000-2010*.

1.2 Objectives of the Master Plan

Specifically the Master Plan will:

- Review and assess existing parks and outdoor recreation facilities within the County,
- Inventory and evaluate the existing open spaces and reserve lands within the County,
- Identify significant recreational and natural environment resources that could play a future role in the County,
- Provide policy direction for management of the existing facilities and lands,
- Outline guidelines for the acquisition of future park and open space lands,
- Identify partnership opportunities with other agencies for outdoor recreational facilities and environmental stewardship,
- Identify priorities for future County initiatives related to parks, outdoor recreation and open spaces.

1.3 Guide to the Master Plan

The Master Plan starts by outlining the existing policy direction of the County relative to parks and open spaces. The Plan then moves on and outlines the existing inventory of parks and open spaces in Leduc County. On that base of background information, the report looks to the future by considering trends in outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship that may impact the County.

The most significant section of the Master Plan provides direction on how the County will manage its existing parks and open spaces, as well as pursue any additions to the County's system. The final section of the Plan looks at priorities for implementation, as well as outlining financial requirements for implementation of the plan.





1.4 Public Involvement

Preparation of the Master Plan has been guided by input received from County staff, other municipalities, provincial government agencies, local clubs and organizations, and members of the pubic.

Information was collected at meetings with municipalities within and adjacent to the County to understand their interests. Contact with provincial agencies investigated existing provincial recreation and environmental commitments within the County. Input was also received from a number of recreation and environmental clubs and organizations that have ongoing activities in the County.

The Draft Master Plan was reviewed with the County's Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and Environment Committee to identify any concerns.

In October and November 2005 a series of public meetings were held across the County to solicit feedback on a Draft Master Plan.

A summary of the draft plan was mailed to a number of individuals and organizations within the County with an interest in parks and open spaces. These people were invited to attend a public meeting or submit written comments on the draft plan.

The draft Master Plan was posted on the County's website to allow people to access a full copy of the plan, complete with maps. The website also provided a summary of the plan, a comment form and promoted upcoming public meetings.

Advertisements were placed in local newspapers to invite attendance at public meetings scheduled across the County. The advertisements ran for three weeks from mid to late October.

The public meetings were held at New Sarepta (Oct 25), Willow Creek (Nov 3), Nisku Recreation Centre (Nov 7) and Sunnybrook (Nov 10). At the public meetings, a display presented highlights of the draft Master Plan and staff were available for discussion. A formal presentation and question period occurred at each meeting. Verbal comments received were recorded on a flip chart. Comment forms were distributed and people were asked to submit written comments.

A number of articles on the draft Master Plan and the public meetings were published in local newspapers.

The majority of public feedback on the draft Master Plan was very positive. A few areas of concern were identified and re-considered in the final approval of the Master Plan. A *Report on Public Input to the Draft Master Plan December 2005* outlines the specific comments received.





2.0 Policy Context

Leduc County is a large and complex rural municipality with a sophisticated management and administrative structure. The County is responsible for roads and infrastructure, agricultural services, emergency services, community services and land use planning. Parks and open spaces are only one of many responsibilities of the County.

In order to provide good governance, the municipality has prepared a number of key planning documents that direct ongoing management and administration. The following section outlines the County's key policies that directly influence management of the parks and open spaces system.

2.1 Municipal Development Plan

Leduc County adopted its *Municipal Development Plan* (MDP) in 1999 to effectively manage subdivision and development of land in the County for the benefit of its present and future residents and their quality of life. The MDP provides a basis for preparation of more detailed plans and rational decision-making in planning matters. As such, the MDP guides the direction of the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan.

There are a number of planning directions in the MDP that will guide the Master Plan. The relevant sections are listed here including the section numbers from the MDP.

Economic Development and Tourism Objectives:

1.1.2 To attract tourists to the County through development and enhancement of tourist and recreation destinations and attractions, service and infrastructure.

Recreation Development and Community Services Objectives:

- 6.1.1 To protect and conserve those areas of the County with the greatest scenic and recreational value.
- 6.1.2 To make available land suitable for parks and recreation uses to serve County residents.
- 6.1.3 To provide parks and recreation programs for County residents in conjunction with those programs offered by adjacent municipalities.
- 6.1.5 To maximize the benefits of existing and proposed public recreation facilities through joint use of facilities and areas.





Environmental Protection Objectives:

8.1.1 To identify and protect internationally, nationally, provincially and regionally significant and environmentally sensitive areas.

2.2 Area Structure Plans

The County has prepared more specific land use plans for areas of the County where there is intensive development pressure.

In 1981 and 1983, the County approved the Nisku Area Structure Plan and the Highway #2 North Industrial Area Structure Plan (ASP). More recently, the Black Mud ASP was approved in 2004. These ASP's primarily address the orderly development of industrial and commercial business in the Nisku Area. The plans identify parcels of reserve lands for future recreation consideration, as well as the environmental significance of the Black Mud Creek valley.

The Saunders Lake ASP prepared in 2003-04 highlights the significance of Saunders Lake as a Natural Area/Open Space. The ASP also identifies the opportunity for a linear corridor to connect Telford Lake, in the City of Leduc, with Saunders Lake.

The North Area Structure Plan (2004) identifies a number of areas as Recreation and Conservation Open Spaces. The areas include the valley, escarpment and ravines of the North Saskatchewan River, the Whitemud, Blackmud, and Irvine Creeks and their tributaries, and Cawes Lake. Cawes Lake is identified as a district level conservation park site, and along the North Saskatchewan River Valley a regional level, multi purpose activity park, with conservation lands, is identified.

2.3 County Business Plan

The Leduc County Business Plan guides the development of the annual budgets for the County and thereby provides broad direction on County priorities. Portions of the Business Plan give specific direction to be addressed in the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan including:

County Mission- To provide quality municipal services to the citizens within Leduc County

Each year specific Goals and Objectives are identified in the business plan that will guide detailed implementation of the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan within the broader context of all County Services.





3.0 Current Situation in Leduc County

Leduc County is fortunate to have a rich environmental setting with a wide variety of parks and open spaces for the enjoyment of residents and visitors to the area. The County is only one of many agencies that are active in outdoor recreation management and environmental stewardship. The following section outlines the major parks and open spaces within the County managed by either the County or other agencies.

3.1 Existing County Parks and Open Spaces

3.1.1 Parks

Leduc County owns a variety of parks ranging from fully developed campgrounds and day use parks on major lakes to small playgrounds in residential subdivisions. Map 1 identifies the location of the larger sites. All of these parks provide some form of outdoor recreation facility and infrastructure. The parks generally fall into three categories:

Regional Parks-provide facilities and services for County residents as well as visitors from the Edmonton Region and across Alberta.

- Centennial Park- is a campground (63 sites) and day use area located on Joseph Lake east of New Sarepta. Facilities in the Park are in fair condition, but require upgrading to meet modern standards. The campground is generally not full except on long weekends. Day use activity, especially boating and beach activities have declined due to low water levels in Joseph Lake. Improving park facilities and increasing attendance are the biggest issues at Centennial Park.
- **Jubilee Park** —is a large campground (110 sites) and major day use area located on Wizard Lake south of Calmar. Boating is a major recreation attraction at the Park. Facilities in the Park are in poor to fair condition, and require upgrading to meet modern standards. The Campground is very busy with increased demand in recent years. Day use facilities for boating, picnicking and beach activities are also very busy with parking and overcrowding problems on most weekends. Improving and expanding facilities to meet existing visitor demand are the key challenges at Jubilee Park.

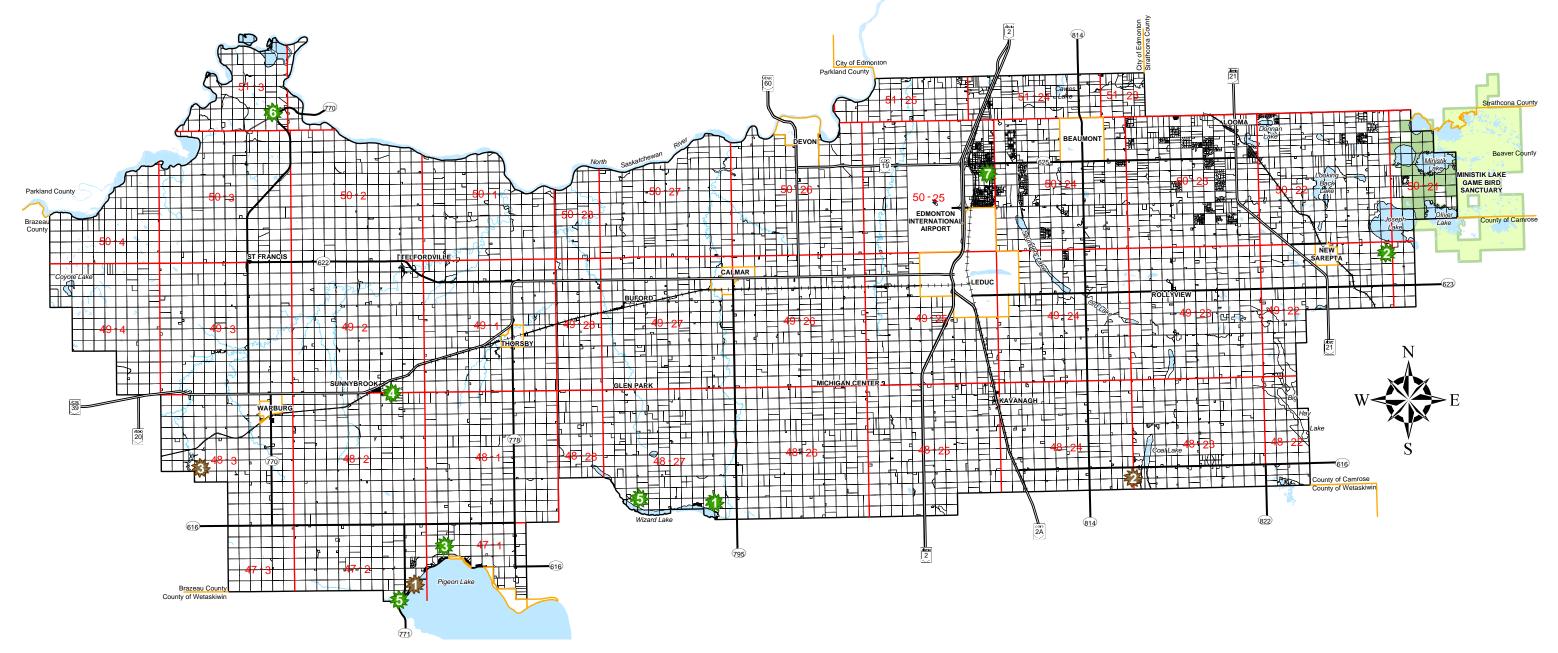
District Parks-provide facilities for nearby residents and visitors from within the County:

• **Mission Beach Day Use Park -** is a small park located on Pigeon Lake within the Mission Beach Subdivision. The site provides a swimming area, boat



Parks and open spaces MASTER PLAN

MAP 1 Existing Parks





Existing Parks - Leduc County

1. Jubilee Park

3. Mission Beach Parks

4. Sunnybrook Park

- 5. Boat Lauches (2)

2. Centennial Park

----- Railway

Secondary

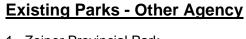
Primary

Highways

Gilwood & Wizard Lake West

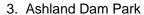
7. Nisku Recreation Centre Park

- 6. Genesee Park











2005





launch, picnicking and children's playground. Most of the facilities at the site are in good condition. The playground is due for replacement and the boat launch has been temporarily closed due to low water levels. The future of the boat launch is the major issue at Mission Beach Day Use Park.

- Mission Beach Campground- is a small campground located north of
 Mission Beach Subdivision. Facilities at the site are in extremely poor
 condition due to vandalism. The campground has been closed since 2001.
 Deciding on the future re-opening or permanent closure of the campground is
 the major issue.
- Sunnybrook Creek Park- is a small picnic area and group use campground located on Highway #39 west of the Hamlet of Sunnybrook. Facilities at the site were re-developed in 2002-2003 by the Thorsby Fish and Game Association. The site is now operated jointly by the County and local community volunteers. Increasing attendance at the park is the only issue of concern.
- Genesee Heritage Park-is a new Park being developed in 2005 adjacent to Secondary Highway #770, near the North Saskatchewan River. The Park is a partnership of EPCOR Generation Inc, Luscar Mines, the Genesee Public Advisory Committee and Leduc County. Epcor has donated the land to the County and will develop the facilities. The Genesee Agricultural Society will operate and maintain the Park. Facilities planned include a stocked trout pond, picnicking, and a heritage display.
- **Gilwood Boat Launch** is a boat launch and parking lot located in the Gilwood Subdivision on Pigeon Lake. The launch is extremely popular for boat launching in the summer, and access to the lake for ice fishing during the winter. Lack of parking space and traffic congestion are the major challenges at Gilwood Boat Launch.
- West Wizard Lake Boat Launch- is a small boat launch located on the west end of Wizard Lake off Range Road #275. The major issues at the site are complaints from adjacent landowners about excessive noise and trespassing and the impact of power boats on the wildlife habitat.
- Nisku Recreation Centre Park- a picnic site, trails and three ball diamonds are located adjacent to the Recreation Centre in the Nisku Business Park. The diamonds are operated in cooperation with the Nisku Ball Federation. The diamonds at Nisku Park are primarily utilized by residents and workers in the Nisku district and City of Leduc. Some of the land is undeveloped, but there is interest in building additional sports fields from several sports associations.





Local Parks-are developed to provide outdoor recreation opportunities to nearby residents.

- Community Halls- many of the local community halls located across the County provide outdoor recreation facilities (e.g. playgrounds, sports fields). The majority of the outdoor facilities were developed in partnership with the Leduc County and the Community Associations provide ongoing operation and maintenance.
- Gilwood Subdivision Lake Access- provides stairs to access a dock system on the shoreline of Pigeon Lake for residents of the Gilwood Subdivision.
 Facilities were developed in partnership with the local residents and are in good condition.
- **Green Acres Park-**provides a ball diamond, pond, playground, group fire pit and trails for use of the subdivision residents. The facilities were developed in cooperation with the local residents. County staff provide ongoing maintenance.
- Enchantment Valley Park- is located on the shoreline of Wizard Lake in the middle of the Enchantment Valley Subdivision. Facilities include a sand beach and swimming area, plus an informal grass play area. Private boat docks are located along the shoreline. Local residents and County staff provide ongoing maintenance. Issues at the park include poor quality sand and overcrowding of boat docks along the shoreline. The Cottage Association is working with Leduc County to improve conditions at the park.
- Valleyview Subdivision Park- includes a ball diamond and playground equipment on two separate parcels of land within the subdivision. The facilities were developed in cooperation with the subdivision residents. Leduc County provides ongoing maintenance. The playgrounds at the park may not meet current safety standards.
- **Hamlet of Sunnybrook Park-** located within the Hamlet on County land is a community park with playground equipment. In addition, a large ball diamond is located on a separate parcel of land. The playground equipment may not meet current safety standards.
- **Looma Ball Diamonds-** Located on Highway #21, the Looma ball diamond was developed with the Looma Community Association. Maintenance is provided by Leduc County. At present, the facilities at the site are in poor condition.
- Sunnyville Subdivision Park- includes a ball diamond developed with the local residents. Facilities at the park are in fair condition.





• Vistas Subdivision Native Grassland- is an area of native vegetation along the Black Mud Creek Valley in the Vistas Subdivision. The land has been fenced to protect native grasslands. Equestrian trails, walking trails and information signs have been developed in cooperation with nearby landowners and the Native Plant Council of Alberta.

3.1.2 Existing Trails

At the present time, formal trail systems in the County are very limited. Developed trails are located at Ministik Bird Game Sanctuary, Coyote Lake Nature Sanctuary and the Waskahegan Trail. The County provides no trail opportunities.

The use of Off Highway Vehicles (OHV including quads and snowmobiles) is very popular in the County. Many informal trails are used by these recreationists. Some of these trail activities have resulted in formal complaints about trespassing, noise and environmental damage.

The County's OHV Bylaw (7-96) allows OHV's to travel along the ditches of County roads but designated OHV trails are not permitted along County roads. The County's Parks Bylaw (17-02) allows OHV's only on designated trails in parks. The Parks Bylaw allows use of OHV's on reserve lands unless signs are posted to prohibit use.

The interest in trail opportunities (equestrian, motorized and non-motorized) was clearly expressed in the County's *Recreation Needs Assessment* and by a number of volunteer trail organizations. Most of the urban municipalities within or adjacent to the County have developed local trail systems and are interested in development of a broader regional trail system.

3.1.3 Open Spaces

Within Leduc County there are a large number of open spaces that are important environmental locations. Other agencies are the principal stewards of these environmental areas and Leduc County manages only a small proportion of the open spaces within the municipality.

The County owns small parcels of open space lands across the County. Some of the land has been acquired by the County for specific reasons (e.g. utility systems, buildings, landfill sites, and cemeteries). The majority of the County owned land was dedicated to the municipality as reserves required when new land subdivisions are created. The existing inventory of County owned lands and open spaces can be categorized as:

• **Environmental Reserves-** are parcels of lands near streams, treed or native grass areas, steep slopes, floodplains and wetlands that provide environmental protection and stewardship benefits.





- Municipal Reserves-These lands are set aside for future consideration as local recreation areas. Parcels of lands along major lakes have also been reserved that provide opportunities for public recreation and access to the lake, as well as, environmental protection of the shoreline.
- **Utility Reserves-** are typically lands that accommodate sewage lines, water lines, waste disposal sites, lagoons, and parcels for future road widening. Some of the utility sites act as buffers to separate differing land uses.

Map 2 identifies the location of the larger parcels of Open Space lands owned by the County.

3.2 Other Agency Parks and Open Spaces

Many other agencies are involved in managing parks and open spaces within and near Leduc County. In order to avoid duplication of services and to ensure coordination of our respective activities, it is important to inventory these activities. The following lists the major existing activities and future interests of other agencies. Map 1 illustrates the location of the major outdoor recreation sites and Map 2 delineates the larger open spaces.

3.2.1 Province of Alberta

Zeiner Provincial Park- located on the north end of Pigeon Lake is managed as part of Pigeon Lake Provincial Park by Alberta Community Development to provide camping, picnicking, swimming, and boat launching (Map 1).

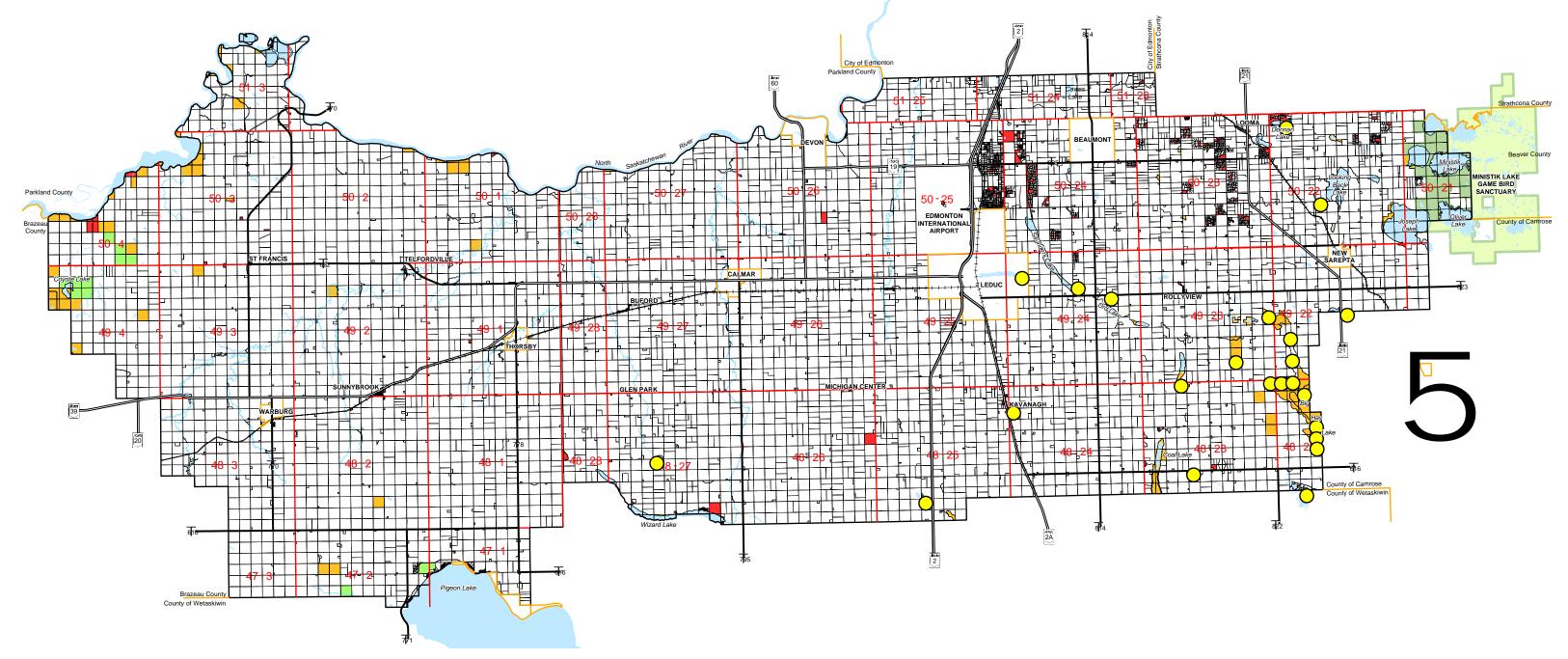
Coal Lake North Provincial Recreation Area-is managed by Alberta Community Development to provide boat launching and picnicking facilities. The campground portion of the site was permanently closed in 2004 (Map 1).

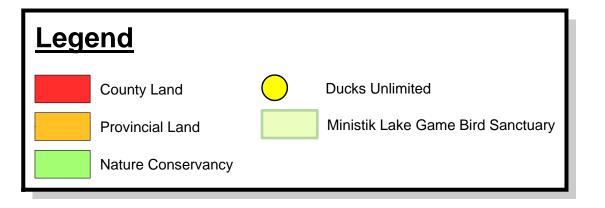
Natural Areas- are provincial lands that are designated as environmental protection sites under provincial legislation and managed by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (Public Lands) and Alberta Community Development (Parks and Protected Areas). Several Natural Areas are located within the western portion of Leduc County including Coyote Lake, Alsike Bat Lake, St. Francis, Genesee, and Thorsby. (Map 2)

Ministik Lake Bird Game Sanctuary- is located in the eastern portion of the County and overlaps the boundaries with Beaver, Camrose and Strathcona Counties. The site is managed by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (Public Lands and Fish & Wildlife) and Ducks Unlimited primarily for waterfowl conservation. Some recreational activities are permitted including trails for hiking, skiing, horseback riding and snowmobiling. (Map 2)



MAP 2
Existing Open Spaces











Provincial Public Lands-are located in numerous locations across the County. The provincial lands are generally managed by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (Public Lands). Many of the parcels are associated with lakes or the North Saskatchewan River. Management is generally for conservation purposes and livestock grazing. (Map 2)

Native Vegetation-Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (Fish & Wildlife) has identified numerous land areas of native vegetation that are important wildlife habitat. Habitat areas generally relate to streams and water bodies and their adjacent riparian areas, as well as larger blocks of upland vegetation. (Map 4)

3.2.2 Municipalities

As part of the Master Planning process, Leduc County contacted municipalities in or adjacent to the County in order to identify their existing park facilities, open spaces and their interests for the future. Meetings were held and written input collected from most municipalities in order to coordinate our future planning. Municipalities provided the following information.

Strathcona County- has no recreation sites near the boundary with Leduc County. The Ministik Lake Game Sanctuary traverses the boundary between the Counties. Strathcona County has an *Outdoor Master Plan* that was prepared n 1988. The Master Plan is currently under review.

Beaver County-has no recreation sites near the boundary. The Ministik Lake Game Sanctuary traverses the boundary between the Counties.

Camrose County-has no recreation sites near the boundary. The Ministik Lake Game Sanctuary traverses the boundary between the Counties.

Wetaskiwin County- manages water access sites on Wizard Lake and Pigeon Lake near the Leduc County boundary.

Brazeau County-has no designated parks near the boundary, but is interested in developing long-term management strategies for the lands adjacent to the North Saskatchewan River.

Parkland County- has a small river access site on the North Saskatchewan River west of the Devon bridge on Hwy #60.

City of Edmonton-has Area Structure Plans for the lands adjacent to Leduc County (Windermere, Heritage Valley, Ellerslie and Ellerslie East). The ASP's identify a number of long term opportunities for parks, green way corridors and natural areas near Leduc County including:





- Environmentally Significant Areas located in SW 16 51 25 W4M, and SW 13 51 25 W4.
- Protection of Whitemud and Blackmud Creek valleys for environmental and recreational values.
- Potential ecological connection to Cawes Lake in Leduc County.
- District and neighbourhood parks with linear greenway connections.
- Use of utility rights of way for greenways and walkway connections.

In addition, the Edmonton's *Multi Use Corridor Plan* identifies major trail corridors near the Leduc County boundary that lead southward towards the City of Leduc, and possibly Devon.

The City's North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan highlights the significance of the river valley and ravines for environmental and recreational values.

City of Leduc- completed an *Open Space Master Plan* in 2000. The City's open space system includes Lion's Park with camping and day use facilities. The City has an existing trail system and there is interest in connecting the trails into a regional trail system with links to Calmar and Devon. The City of Leduc has identified Telford Lake Recreation Area as a major recreation site and natural area adjacent to Leduc County.

Town of Beaumont- has a number of parks and trails near the Leduc County boundary. Opportunities exist to link the parks and trails to adjacent lands in the County. The Town has a *Master Trail Plan* that was updated in 2003. Beaumont completed a *Ten Year Capital Facility Plan* in 2004 that provides recommendations for future recreation facility development.

Town of Devon-recently completed their *Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan.* Located in the Town is the Lion's Park and Campground in the North Saskatchewan River Valley east of the Hwy #60 bridge. The Town also has a trail system near its perimeter boundary. The Town is interested in development of more trails and parks west of Hwy #60, trail connections along the North Saskatchewan River, a site for Off Highway Vehicles, and a dog off-leash area

Town of Calmar- in 2002, Calmar completed their *Long-term Parks Plan*. The Town has initiated development of a new park at its south end that includes a campground, soccer fields and BMX track. Calmar has started a perimeter trail system and is interested in a regional trail system.

Village of Thorsby-has the Lion's Campground and plans to expand their trail system around the perimeter of the Village. The Village is interested in coordinating development of new soccer fields.





Village of Warburg - is interested in development of trails and coordinating development of new soccer fields.

Village of New Sarepta-has a strong interest in the County's management of nearby Centennial Park.

3.2.3 Other Agencies

Leduc County also collected information from other groups and organizations that are actively involved in outdoor recreation or environmental activities within the County. The contacts identified the following information.

Waskahegan Trail-is a hiking, snowshoeing and cross-county ski trail that follows Black Mud Creek, Saunders Lake and Coal Lake in Leduc County. The trail is located primarily on private property with agreement of the landowners for use by Trail Association members. The Waskahegan Trail Association, a volunteer group, developed the trail and provide ongoing maintenance.

Trans Canada Trail- is an initiative of Alberta Trail Net, a non-government organization that is working on development of a multi-use national trail system. The proposed route of the Trans Canada Trail traverses Leduc County from north to south. Two sections have been identified within Leduc County from the City of Leduc to Wizard Lake area, and from the City of Leduc to Devon. At this time no trail has been built within the County.

Snowmobile Trails- informal snowmobile trails exist in several locations across the County, many of them following streams and river valleys. Initial investigations indicate that many of the snowmobile routes cross private lands and there are no formal agreements with the landowners. Snowmobile clubs in the County have expressed an interest in working with the County to develop a formal, approved system of snowmobile trails emanating from sites where formal trails have been designated (e.g. Ministik Lake Game Sanctuary)

Ashland Dam Park- is located west of Warburg and is operated by the Thorsby Fish and Game Association on lands owned by Talisman Energy Ltd. The Park provides facilities for camping, picnicking, and fishing. (Map 1)

Genesee Coal Mine—EPCOR Generation Inc. owns a large block of land in the western portion of Leduc County that is being actively mined to supply coal for the Genesee power plants. Over the long term as strip mining operations are completed, the land will be reclaimed for other uses. The opportunity to reclaim portions of these lands for recreation and environmental stewardship may be of interest to the community. (Maps 3 & 4)





Private Recreation Facilities-A variety of private commercial recreation facilities provide outdoor recreation services within Leduc County. Private facilities include numerous golf courses, a ski hill and a water ski park.

River Valley Alliance- is a regional advisory group that is working towards a linked park system from Devon to Fort Saskatchewan in the valley of the North Saskatchewan River. Municipal members of the Alliance include Devon, Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, and the Counties of Leduc, Parkland, Strathcona and Sturgeon.

Beaverhills Initiative-is a new partnership organization that is working on shared initiatives and coordinated actions to maintain the Beaverhills/Cooking Lake Moraine as a sustainable community. Municipal members of the Initiative include the Counties of Beaver, Camrose, Lamont, Leduc, and Strathcona. Other members include representatives of federal and provincial government agencies, as well as several nongovernment organizations. (Map 4)

Ducks Unlimited- is a conservation agency that works to conserve wildlife habitat, especially waterfowl habitat. DU has a number of wetland conservation projects in the County, primarily in the Big Hay Lakes area (see Map 2). The agency has identified a number of sites of interest across the County that are significant waterfowl habitat (see Map 4).

Nature Conservancy of Canada- is a conservation agency interested in the protection of lands of high conservation value. The NCC has two projects underway in Leduc County at Coyote Lake and Pigeon Lake. The intent of the Coyote Lake project is to protect waterfowl and wildlife habitat and the watershed. The intent of the Pigeon Lake project is to protect small creek watersheds in the north west corner of the lake as they influence the water quality and fishery of Pigeon Lake. (Map 2)

The NCC is initiating a major project focusing on the Beaver Hills-Cooking Lake Moraine in the eastern portion of the County. (Map 4)

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance-The Alliance is a non-profit society whose purpose is to protect and improve water quality and ecosystem functioning in the North Saskatchewan Watershed. The agency takes an ecosystem approach coupled with a, collaborative process to find the balance between human desires and watershed integrity.

All of Leduc County is within the North Saskatchewan watershed.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas-In 1991 the report *Environmentally Sensitive Areas Study: County of Leduc* was prepared to inventory and evaluate environmentally sensitive and significant areas on public and privately owned lands within the County. The study identified significance based on the following components of the natural environment:

- Hazard lands (floodplains, steep slopes).
- Areas which perform vital environmental functions (aquifer recharge areas).





- Areas of geological features.
- Features important for cultural, historical, prehistoric or archaeological reasons.
- Areas which contain significant, rare or endangered species.
- Areas which are unique habitats with limited representation in the region, or that represent remnant of previously abundant habitat.
- Areas which contain an unusual diversity of plant and/or animal communities.
- Areas of large relatively undisturbed habitats.
- Areas which contain plants, animals or landforms which are unusual or of significance.
- Areas which provide important linking functions and permit movement of wildlife over considerable distances.

Thirty-one environmentally sensitive areas were identified within Leduc County (Map 4). The areas range from internationally significant palaeontological site (Genesee Natural Area) to numerous wetland areas of local significance for waterfowl production (Looking Back Lake). Fifteen of the sites are located in the western third of the County (west of Conjuring Creek), where a large proportion of the remaining forested lands in the County are located. Environmentally significant area in the remaining, predominantly cultivated areas of the county represent remnant forested areas and productive wetland sites and creeks.

Some of the ESA sites are already being managed for conservation purposes by other agencies (e.g. Ministik Lake Sanctuary). Other sites are on private lands where landowners may voluntarily manage them with consideration of their environmental significance.





4.0 Future Trends

Predicting the future can be very difficult, but is essential to provide some direction for future parks and open space planning. The following section discusses a number of trends that need to be considered in the County's Parks and Open Spaces master planning.

4.1 Population Growth

The population of Leduc County and the Edmonton region can be expected to increase and put pressure on existing park facilities and open spaces and result in demand for more parks.

Leduc County has experienced a relatively low population growth rate in past years based on Statistics Canada data. From 1991 to 2001, the population grew from 11,503 to 12,528 representing an average annual growth rate of 0.857 percent. However, economic conditions may increase the County's growth rate in future years. Table 1 presents the County's future population projections based on a 1.5% and 3.0% annual growth rates. The first rate is probably realistic, and the second rate is optimistic on a sustained basis.

TABLE 1: PARKS AND OPEN SPACES MASTER PLAN LEDUC COUNTY POPULATION PROJECTIONS

2001	Growth Rate	2015	Increase in 15 years	2025	Increase in 25 years
12,528	1.5%	15,663	3,135	18,177	5,649
12,528	3.0%	19,518	6,990	26,231	13,703

Projected population increases of 3,135 to 6,990 in fifteen years, and 5,649 to 13,703 in twenty-five years will have major impacts on County services. The provision of new parks and open spaces will be needed to meet the needs of new County residents.

In addition to the local population, parks and open spaces within the County are utilized by residents of the region. The Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area, (defined by Statistics Canada to include urban and rural municipalities surrounding Edmonton), is expected to grow to 1,120,126 in 2015 and 1,218,645 in 2025 (City of Edmonton *Urban Parks Master Plan-Leisure and Recreation Trends Analysis*, 2002). Rapid population increases are forecast in south-west Edmonton, the City of Leduc, the Towns of Devon and Beaumont, as well as the Village of Calmar. Leduc County will need to consider





population growth in the region and the County's role in providing outdoor recreation services.

The location of population expansion within the County needs to be considered in terms of the provision of future recreation services. Area Structure Plans completed for the County suggest the majority of growth will be in the area close to Nisku. The increase will create more demand for recreation facilities in the central portion of the County. Recreational and residential growth around Pigeon Lake is expected to continue which will put additional stress on recreational facilities around the lake. Expansion of the power generating plant near Genesee may also result in minor population growth in the north western portion of the County.

4.2 Demographic and Lifestyle Trends

Demographic and lifestyle trends will need to be considered in the Master Plan. The City of Calgary and City of Edmonton have both conducted detailed trend analyses as part of their own recreation planning. (City of Calgary *Open Space Plan*, 2002 and City of Edmonton *Urban Parks Master Plan- Leisure and Recreation Trends Analysis*, 2002) Key factors from these reports that are relevant to Leduc County include:

- The population is aging which influences the choice of recreation activities (e.g. preference for less strenuous activities like walking rather than baseball).
- The proportion of the population with some form of disabilities is expected to increase. The most common disability is mobility disability (limited ability to walk, move or stand). The type and design of new outdoor recreation facilities will need to consider accessibility.
- The children of Baby Boomers will start having children in about 2005, peaking in 2010-2012. Demand for facilities for young families may re-surge (e.g. family campgrounds).
- Increasing flexibility in work times and school times will create the need for more flexible recreation opportunities. Recreation pursuits that are more spontaneous, individual and less structured may become more popular.
- Leisure time is decreasing in Alberta as more people work longer hours. Leisure time is at a premium with more people feeling rushed and seeking recreation close to home.

Other trends that have been noted in Leduc County include:

• The attraction of urbanites to rural areas is bringing a new set of values to regions surrounding urban areas. People moving from the city to country residential subdivisions may demand more and different recreation services. For example,





interest in recreation trails, off-leash dog walking areas, and natural parklands may increase.

Recent spikes in gasoline prices may change holiday patterns. Local holidays
close to home may become popular as the cost of traveling to distant attractions
becomes more expensive.

4.3 Outdoor Recreation Trends

The Alberta Recreation Survey conducted by Alberta Community Development in 2000 provides information about recreation practices and interests in Alberta. The report *A Look at Leisure # 46: Outdoor Pursuits* provides a look at what outdoor pursuits household members and respondents participated in, as well as the outdoor activities favoured by respondents. The top ten outdoor pursuits with the highest participation levels of household and respondent participation include:

- Walking for pleasure,
- Gardening,
- Bicycling,
- Overnight camping,
- Picnicking (in the countryside),
- Day hiking,
- Picnicking (within a city),
- Swimming (in lakes, rivers, ponds),
- Jogging/running,
- Fishing.

The study also addresses changes in participation levels since the first recreation survey in 1981. Walking for pleasure has increased by 4% since 1981. Gardening and bicycling have maintained their popularity. However, some of the participation levels have decreased including overnight camping, (from 64.8% to 47.6%), jogging/running (from 53.6% to 32.9 %) and fishing (from 54.75 to 31.5%).

The Alberta Recreation Survey was undertaken again in 2004 and data from the most recent survey will be available in 2005 for consideration in the Leduc County Master Plan.

Local experience in Leduc County reflects some but not all of these provincial trends. Increased interest in walking trails has been occurring locally. However, demand for more overnight camping facilities has been voiced, especially at Wizard Lake. Increased interest in fishing (and boat launching) has been felt at Pigeon Lake.





4.4 County Needs Assessment

In 2002 the County completed a study entitled *Leduc County Recreation Needs*Assessment that provides an indication of the interests of County residents for recreation and leisure. The Needs Assessment focused on recreation programs and facility services, but some future trends were identified that relate to parks and open space planning:

Future Trends in Recreation Demand

- Increasing value place on leisure time and recreational activities,
- Future population of seniors will be healthier and more active,
- Future activities will be oriented to the individual and family with less team or group participation,
- Programming that combines activities for parents and their children,
- In Alberta, 70% of recreation infrastructure was developed 30 years ago an in need of updating,
- Citizens are more discerning and their expectations higher about the quality of facilities and recreation opportunities that are available,
- Reduced financial resource of government will require greater involvement of the private sector through partnership arrangements.

The Needs Assessment identified specific facility needs relevant to parks and open space. Trails for walking and bicycling were identified as the second priority for new recreation facilities in the County. Trail development for snowmobiling and horseback riding was ranked as the fifth priority.

Other outdoor recreation trends in the County are apparent through ongoing requests for facilities and activities that are received at the Parks and Recreation Department. Frequent inquiries are received for the following:

- Boat launching facilities on Pigeon Lake and Wizard Lake.
- Off-leash dog walking areas.
- Public access locations to the North Saskatchewan River Valley.
- Trail locations for Off Highway Vehicles (quads and snowmobiles)

4.5 Environmental Trends

As the County considers the future of its parks and open spaces, environmental trends also need to be analyzed. Environmental trends have also been studied by the City of Calgary and City of Edmonton (City of Calgary *Open Space Plan*, 2002 and City of Edmonton *Urban Parks Master Plan-Leisure and Recreation Trends Analysis*, 2002).





Environmental trends relevant to Leduc County include:

- The public strongly support and value parks and open spaces. Public interest in "natural" parkland is increasing.
- The public values natural parklands and open spaces where public access and use is ensured, but where environmentally significant areas within the area are protected.
- Environmental preservation will continue to be important to Baby Boomers and may increase for others as awareness of environmental issues such as food and water safety become personalized.
- Individuals and non-profit organizations are taking a more active role in environmental stewardship. Donations of private land to conservation organizations and voluntary conservation agreements on private property are becoming more common.
- Regional initiatives that address environmental stewardship on an ecological basis are happening across Alberta (e.g. watersheds, moraine landforms). Initiatives to ensure ecological connection between existing open spaces are being actively pursued (e.g. riparian corridors along streams).
- Organizations with participation of a broad spectrum of individuals and agencies are being formed to work cooperatively on environmental stewardship programs.





5.0 Key Planning Considerations

5.1 Parks and Outdoor Recreation

The following section outlines the key considerations for Leduc County as it addresses its future direction for management of outdoor recreation and parks within the County:

- County policy direction highlights the importance of outdoor recreation (e.g. Municipal Development Plan).
- Most existing parks facilities are meeting demands but require facility upgrading.
- There is increased demand for more camping opportunities at regional parks like Jubilee Park on Wizard Lake.
- Public demands for access to major recreational lakes exceed the capacity of existing facilities.
- The County owns many small parcels of land scattered across County, but has a
 very limited land base for major recreation expansion. As development pressure
 increases within the County, additional land for outdoor recreation purposes will
 need to be identified by the County.
- The Province of Alberta is limiting its involvement in providing outdoor recreation facilities like campgrounds and boat launches.
- Many other agencies and municipalities have outdoor recreation facilities and interests in the Leduc Region. The County is not the only player in providing outdoor recreation services and there will be opportunities to develop partnerships in the Region.
- Increasing demands for parks can be anticipated from local and regional population growth, especially in the central portion of County.
- The type of recreation facilities demanded in the future is expected to change.
 More facilities that allow spontaneous use by individuals are anticipated, for
 example picnic sites, boat launches, trails and dog walking sites. As the County
 population becomes more urban oriented, the demand for more recreation
 facilities and a higher standard of park services will likely occur.
- Financial resources for building and operating parks are limited in the County. There is strong competition for financial resources with other County services, as well as with other agencies.





5.2 Open Spaces and Environmental Stewardship

The following points highlight the key considerations for Leduc County as it addresses its future direction for management of open spaces within the County:

- County policy direction highlights importance of environmental stewardship.
- The County has numerous small parcels of lands that protect specific environmental features on a local scale (e.g. a slough or stream).
- Other agencies manage major open spaces in Leduc County that provide significant environment stewardship benefits (e.g. Coyote Lake).
- A variety of environmentally significant areas have been identified within the county.
- New environmental stewardship initiatives are under way in the County (e.g.Beaverhill/Cooking Lake Moraine).
- Population growth will place increased pressure on the natural environment.
- Recent years have seen an increase in awareness of environmental issues (e.g. water quality) and a greater interest in protecting the natural environment.





6.0 Vision, Goals and Objectives

Effective management of the County's Parks and Open Spaces must satisfy the overall planning directions provided by the Municipal Development Plan, Area Structure Plans and County Business Plan. To meet these broader directions, specific vision statements, goals and objectives for the County's Parks and Open Spaces have been developed.

6.1 Vision Statements

Parks Vision

"People enjoying our parks for fun, relaxation, and quiet contemplation."

Open Space Vision

"Protected places providing the natural life support system for our community."

6.2 Goal Statements

Parks Goal- to maintain the quality of life for residents and visitors by providing access to a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Open Spaces Goal- to maintain environmental quality by protecting the natural environment for the benefit of existing and future generations.

6.3 Objectives

Parks Objectives

Specific parks objectives include:

- Provide a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities to meet the needs of County residents on a year-round basis.
- Provide regional outdoor recreation opportunities to support economic development for tourism.
- Ensure public access is available to all major lakes and rivers within the County.
- Identify and reserve lands that have potential to meet future recreation needs of County residents and visitors.





- Work cooperatively with other municipalities, agencies, organizations and the private sector to provide a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Direct major outdoor recreation facilities to be located in attractive natural settings in areas of high population concentration in the County.
- Use public financial resources effectively to accomplish these objectives.

Open Spaces Objectives

Specific Open Spaces Objectives are:

- Protect environmentally sensitive areas and provide a sustainable and biologically diverse open space system that represents the natural environment of Leduc County.
- Protect riparian zones adjacent to water bodies and the valley systems associated with rivers and major streams.
- Protect linear vegetation corridors to provide important ecological connections between existing and future open spaces.
- Maintain the large blocks of forested areas and native grasslands that remain in the County.
- Identify natural features that may present environmental hazards to people.
- Work cooperatively with other agencies, organizations and landowners to protect the natural environment.





7.0 Park Management Policies

The Park Management policies provide more detailed principles to guide management of the existing County parks and provide direction for the addition of new parks in Leduc County.

7.1 Adopt a Park Classification System and Standards

In order to assist with management of Leduc County's existing and future parks, the County will adopt a park classification system to clarify the intent of management of different types of parks.

Regional Parks- will be managed as major outdoor recreation parks that provide facilities for County residents, as well as visitors form the Edmonton region and across Alberta.

District Parks- will be generally be smaller in size and provide outdoor recreation opportunities to nearby residents (i.e. within 10 kms).

Local Parks- are small sites that meet the outdoor recreation needs of residents in the immediate vicinity of the park (i.e. within 1 km).

Standards- Leduc County will develop a series of Park Standards to control the quality of recreation facilities provided within County parks. Standards will be adopted for Park infrastructure (e.g. trails, roads, and camp sites), buildings, signs, playgrounds, and site furnishings. Facilities will be made handicapped accessible where possible. The standards will apply to all park facilities built by Leduc County or on behalf of the County through partnerships.

7.2 Management of Existing Parks

Leduc County currently manages a number of parks and recreation sites from major regional sites like Jubilee Park to small local sites like Green Acres Park. The general management direction for most existing parks will be to maintain the facilities and services provided. A few small parks will be closed to address ongoing management problems.

The advanced age and poor condition of much of the County's infrastructure and recreation facilities is one of the major issues that needs to be addressed in future management by the County.

Specific policy direction for each Park is outlined below.





Regional Parks

Centennial Park- Centennial Park will be managed to provide family oriented, local and regional water-based recreation opportunities. Facilities will be provided for overnight camping, picnicking, swimming, and boating.

In order to address low attendance, a management or business plan will be prepared for the park to identify new facilities or services that would attract new visitors. A park redevelopment plan will be prepared and implemented to improve the quality of the existing infrastructure and provide new attractions as identified in the management/business plan.

Jubilee Park- Jubilee Park will be managed to provide family oriented, local and regional water-based recreation opportunities. Facilities will be provided for overnight camping, picnicking, swimming, boating and walking.

The *Jubilee Park Redevelopment Plan* completed in 2004 identifies a program for upgrading the Park's facilities and services. The County will implement the redevelopment program in several phases as funding is approved.

District Parks

Mission Beach Day Use Park-The Mission Beach Day Use Park will be managed to provide public access to Pigeon Lake primarily for residents of the Mission Beach Subdivision and nearby residents. Facilities will be provided for swimming, picnicking, a playground structure, toilet and parking.

The existing boat launch service will be relocated to another location to eliminate problems with shallow water depths and traffic congestion issues. Winter access to the ice surface of Pigeon Lake will be maintained.

The Day Use Area will be developed and managed in partnership with the Mission Beach cottagers.

Mission Beach Campground- The Mission Beach Campground will be permanently closed and reclaimed. Sufficient camping services are available in the district to meet the needs of County residents. The Campground site will be sold and the proceeds used to support improved day use recreation facilities on North Pigeon Lake.

Sunnybrook Creek Park- The Park at Sunnybrook will be managed as a group use area for residents of the local area and surrounding district. Groups may reserve the site for overnight camping, community picnics, or special events. In addition, Sunnybrook will be managed as a day use highway rest stop and picnic area.

Priority will be placed on increasing attendance and use of the Park.





Genesee Heritage Park- The new Genesee Heritage Park will be managed to provide local picnicking, fishing opportunities and to present the historical heritage of the area. The site will also serve travelers on Hwy #770 as a rest stop and picnic site.

Development of the site will be in partnership with EPCOR Generation Inc, Luscar Mines and the Genesee Public Advisory Committee. Operation of the Genesee Park will be in partnership with the Genesee Agricultural Society.

Gilwood Boat Launch- The Gilwood site will be managed to provide local and regional public access to Pigeon Lake on a year round basis.

Public services to be provided include a boat launch, parking, toilet and a garbage receptacle. Vehicle parking at the site will be improved to address congestion problems.

Nisku Recreation Centre Park-will be managed to provide sports fields for residents of the Nisku district. A detailed site plan will be prepared to consider development of additional sports fields. Development and operation of the Nisku Park will be undertaken in cooperation with the Nisku Recreation Centre Society, the Nisku Ball Federation, and other interested parties.

The results of a feasibility study that is underway in 2005 for a new regional recreation facility may influence the future management of the existing Nisku Recreation Centre Park.

Local Parks

Community Halls- Outdoor recreation facilities at community halls will continue to be maintained in partnership with the Community Associations.

West Wizard Lake Boat Launch-that is located on the west end of Wizard Lake off Range Road #275 will be managed to provide local public access to Wizard Lake on a year round basis. .

Gilwood Beach Subdivision Lake Access-The Gilwood Beach Lake Access Site will be managed to provide shared access to Pigeon Lake for residents of the subdivision. Services provided include a trail and stairs to access the shoreline and boat docks.

The Lake Access site will be managed in partnership with the Gilwood cottagers.

Green Acres Park-Green Acres Park will be managed to provide a local park for residents of the Green Acres Subdivision. An open grass play area, ball diamond, playground, group fire pit and trails will continue to be provided.





Playground equipment will be assessed to see if it meets current safety standards and repaired or replaced as necessary.

Green Acres Park will be developed and managed in partnership with the Green Acres Subdivision residents.

Enchantment Valley Park- The park area at Enchantment Valley will be managed to provide a local shoreline park for residents of the subdivision. An open grass play area, beach/swimming area and opportunities for boat docking will be provided.

Enchantment Valley Park will be developed and managed in partnership with the subdivision residents. A redevelopment plan will be prepared for Enchantment Valley Park in cooperation with the Cottage Association.

Valleyview Subdivision Park- will continue to be managed to provide a local park for residents of the Valleyview Subdivision. Playground equipment will be assessed to see if it meets current safety standards.

Valleyview Subdivision Park will be developed and managed in partnership with the subdivision residents.

Hamlet of Sunnybrook Park- will continue to be managed to provide a local park for residents of Sunnybrook. Playground equipment will be assessed to see if it meets current safety standards.

The Sunnybrook Park will be developed and managed in partnership with the local residents.

Looma Ball Diamonds-will continue to be managed to provide a sports field for residents of the Looma area.

The County will work with the Community Association to repair and upgrade the existing facilities, or to develop facilities at a new location within the hamlet or nearby district.

Sunnyville Subdivision Park-will continue to be managed to provide a sports field for residents of the Sunnyville Subdivision. The Park will be developed and managed in partnership with local residents.

Vistas Subdivision Native Grassland- will continue to be managed to protect the native vegetation. The County will work in cooperation with local residents and the Alberta Native Plant Council.





7.3 Establishing New Parks

New Parks will be developed in Leduc County in response to increased demands for outdoor recreation facilities. New park opportunities may be developed through a number of means including:

- dedication of reserve lands or donation of cash in new land subdivisions,
- transfer of sites or lands from other agencies,
- donations.
- partnerships with other municipalities and agencies, or
- acquisition by the County.

The opportunity to develop new parks and recreation facilities in Leduc County will be pursued based on the following criteria:

Priority for County Residents-Leduc County's primary focus in providing new parks will be to provide outdoor recreation facilities that meet the needs of residents of the County. Facilities that attract visitors to the County and provide economic benefits to the region will be a second priority.

Day Use Facilities- Outdoor recreation trends are changing the type of facilities requested in the County. New parks in the County will focus on providing more day use facilities for casual activities like walking, cycling, picnicking, nature appreciation, dog walking and access to water for swimming, boating and fishing.

Development of new or expanded campground facilities will be considered by the County where there is demonstrated demand by County residents.

New Parks in Centre and Northwest- At present, the County manages regional parks in the eastern and central portions of the County at Centennial Park on Joseph Lake and Jubilee Park on Wizard Lake. The Province of Alberta provides provincial recreation attractions in the eastern and southwestern portion of the County including a major trail system at Ministik Bird Game Sanctuary and Zeiner Park on Pigeon Lake.

The County will place priority on development of new regional or district parks in the central portion of the County to meet anticipated population increases. Potential sites at Rabbit Hill, Saunders Lake and Cawes Lake have already been identified. In addition, the County will place priority on identification of a new regional or district park in the northwestern portion of the County where there is currently no major County park

Ensure Lake Access for Recreation- new park lands and facilities will be supported on all major lakes within the County to ensure the public can access the lake and shoreline. Lake access may be provided by the County or other public agencies. Access opportunities will only be provided if the lake is capable of supporting new or additional recreation activity.





New subdivision developments on major lakes will be encouraged to dedicate municipal reserve lands on the lake shoreline. The shoreline lands will provide public access to the water and lakeshore, shared facilities for residents of the subdivision (e.g. communal docks) and linear trail connections. Dedication of shorelines will also be encouraged to protect the lake environment.

Support North Saskatchewan River Valley Access-new park lands and facilities will be supported at locations along the North Saskatchewan River Valley to provide public access to the river and valley. The new locations will be carefully managed and controlled to ensure appropriated use of the valley and to avoid conflict with adjacent residents.

Priority for recreation facilities will be on the river valley between Devon and Edmonton. The County will continue its partnership with other municipalities through the River Valley Alliance to promote a continuous valley park between Devon and Fort Saskatchewan.

The County will prepare a long range Recreation Concept Plan to guide future recreation development of the North Saskatchewan River Valley upstream of Devon. The intent of the Recreation Plan will be to ensure future public access to the valley will be available at regular intervals (e.g. 10 kilometres). Identification of potential public access locations to the valley upstream of Devon will be investigated. The provision of river valley access facilities will be coordinated with the Province of Alberta, the Town of Devon and the Counties of Parkland and Brazeau.

The Recreation Plan for the upper North Saskatchewan River Valley may also identify a location for a new County regional park to service the northwestern portion of Leduc County.

Private subdivision developments located along the North Saskatchewan River Valley will be encouraged to dedicate reserve lands along the river and valley edge. The reserve lands will provide environmental benefits, (e.g. slope protection), aesthetic benefits (maintain trees), and the opportunity for carefully managed public access to the river and along the river valley.

Identify Parks in Area Structure Plans-New park locations will be considered in the preparation of Area Structure Plans. Parks will be identified in regions or districts where major population growth is planned, and there are natural resources that are attractive for recreation (e.g. trees, lakes, and river and stream valleys).

Prepare Recreation Concept Plans- The County will prepare concept plans to outline the future recreation development of all sites identified in existing or new Areas Structure Plans. Recreation concept plans will be prepared for Saunders Lake, Cawes Lake and the North Saskatchewan River Valley site at Rabbit Hill that have been identified in existing Area Structure Plans. The Recreation Concept Plans will provide broad direction on the future role and recreation services that could be provided at identified sties.





Input to Land Use Planning- In order to identify opportunities for new park lands, the Parks and Recreation Department will work closely with the Planning and Development Department to review of land use plans and development proposals.

7.4 Regional Coordination of Park Management

The County will coordinate management of its parks and outdoor recreation facilities with the Province of Alberta, other municipalities in the region, non-government organizations and the private sector. Coordination will focus on avoiding potential competition among sites and complementing the services provided by the other agencies. Open communication and dialogue will be maintained with the other agencies to encourage ongoing coordination.

- Improve North Pigeon Lake Access-Leduc County will work closely with other agencies to improve public access opportunities for boat launching and parking along the north shoreline of Pigeon Lake.
- **Major Recreation Facilities.**-The County will continue its policy of encouraging major recreational facilities like sports fields to be located in urban areas where there are enough people to support the facilities. Cost-share agreements between the County and urban municipalities will be supported.
- **Regional Partnerships-**New County parks will attract visitors from the surrounding Region. The County will work in partnership with other municipalities and agencies to provide outdoor recreation facilities of benefit to both residents of the County and visitors from the region.

7.5 Areas of Interest for New Parks

Map 3 identifies land areas of interest for consideration as future new parks in Leduc County. Sites include the following locations:

• North Saskatchewan River Valley - the River Valley is a prominent recreational and environmental feature in Leduc County. Public interest in gaining recreational access to the river and valley is very high. The County is already working closely with the River Valley Alliance to support recreational opportunities in the valley downstream of Devon.





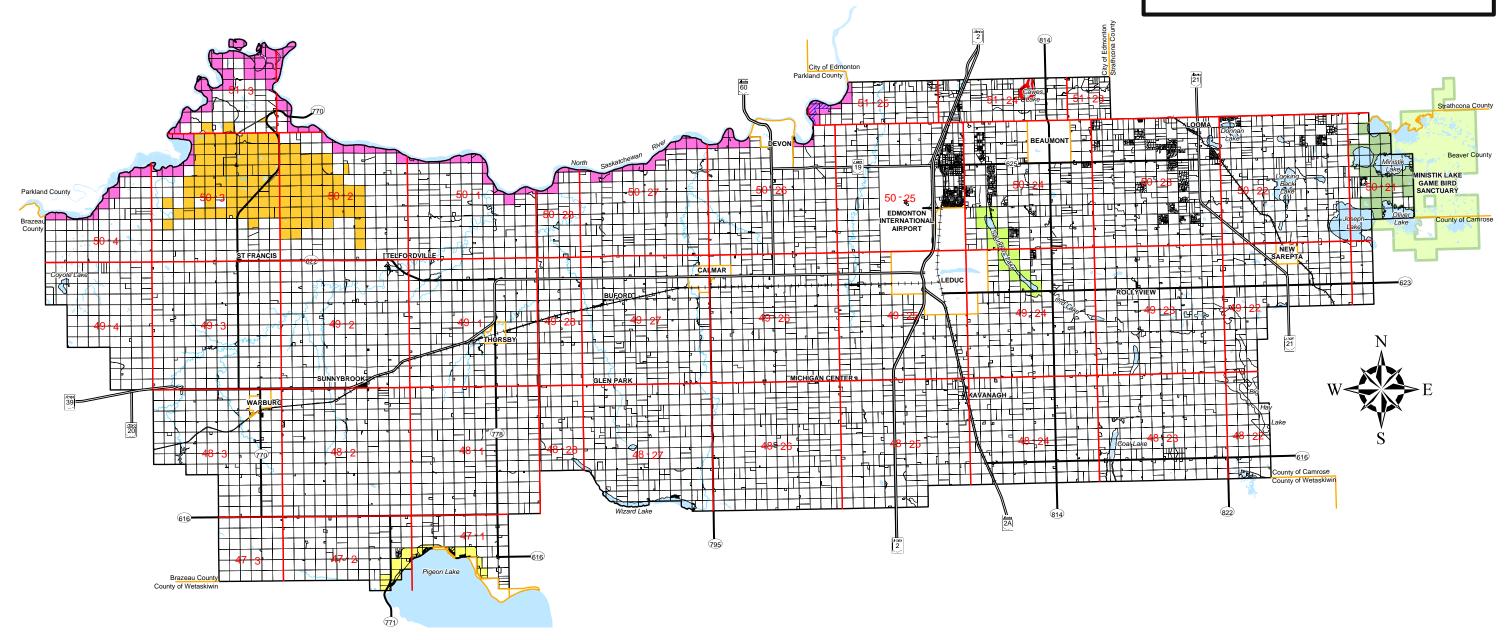
- North Pigeon Lake- Pigeon Lake is also a prominent recreational and
 environmental feature in Leduc County. Some recreational facilities have been
 developed on the Lake, but they cannot meet the demand for day use
 opportunities, especially boat launching. New locations for future day use park
 facilities or expansion of services at existing sites will be considered.
- Rabbit Hill- the County's North Area Structure Plan identifies the Rabbit Hill area along the North Saskatchewan River Valley as a key location for a regional park that may include both public and private facilities. The Rabbit Hill area already supports Rabbit Hill Ski Area and Shalom Water Ski Park.
- Saunders Lake- the County's Saunders Lake Area Structure Plan identifies Saunders Lake as a key recreational and environmental feature. Residential development is planned for the area, and the proximity to the City of Leduc makes the site a significant location.
- Cawes Lake- the North Area Structure Plan identifies Cawes Lake for consideration as a conservation park. The Lake is a significant waterfowl habitat site with good opportunities for passive recreation like trails and wildlife viewing. Identification of the Cawes Lake area for residential expansion in the County, plus proximity to Beaumont and Edmonton, makes Cawes Lake a key site for future park consideration.
- **Genesee-** Interest in future development of new recreational opportunities in the north west portion of the County has been identified by Leduc County. Reclaimed mining areas at Genesee may provide a land base for a major regional park in the future (i.e.30 years).

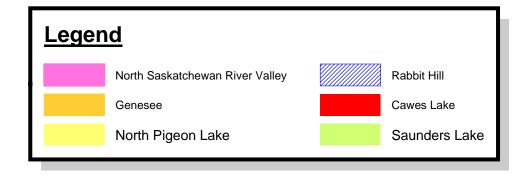
Leduc County will work closely with Luscar Mines and EPCOR Generation Inc in their coal mine reclamation planning to consider future use of the lands for public recreation activities as part of a broader mix of land uses. Any decisions on reclamation related development would be done in cooperation with Alberta Environment.



Parks and open spaces Master plan

MAP 3
Areas of Interest for
Future Parks











8.0 Trail Development Policies

Leduc County will provide non-mechanized trail opportunities in the development and re-development of County Parks. If possible, trails in County Parks will be linked to regional trail systems developed by others.

Leduc County will **not** lead development of regional trails, but will assist other municipalities, agencies and non-profit trail organizations in the development of regional trails. County assistance on regional trails may occur in one of the following ways.

- The County will assist other agencies where private land owner support for trails is demonstrated.
- Leduc County will liaise with other municipalities within or adjacent to the County regarding their interests in regional trail extensions.
- The County will coordinate planning and development of trail systems with organized trail associations. The trail associations will be responsible for securing agreements to cross private lands, landowner liability protection, routing, design, construction and long term maintenance of trails systems. The County would provide liaison with other agencies and landowners.
- The County may permit development of designated trails on County owned lands that have natural features that are attractive for trails.
- Leduc County will consider the suitability of existing linear corridors (road allowances, rail beds, utility corridors) for potential use for trails, now or in future.
- The County will consider opportunities for dedication of linear corridors for recreation reserves in larger new residential subdivisions. The linear corridors may be developed for trail systems if demand warrants. The combination of Environmental Reserves and Municipal Reserves along streams will be encouraged to provide environmental and recreational benefits.
- The County will place preference on development of non-mechanized trails (walking and biking).
- The County may support other agencies or groups who wish to develop mechanized trails within the municipality. The mechanized trails must be in a closely controlled and managed location that is not environmentally sensitive.





9.0 Open Spaces Management Policies

The Open Spaces management policies provide principles to guide management of the existing County Open Spaces to meet our Park Objectives and Open Spaces Objectives. The policies also provide direction for the addition of new Open Spaces in the County, and how the County will coordinate management with environmental agencies active in the Region.

9.1 Adopt an Open Spaces Classification System

In order to assist with management of Leduc County's existing and future Open Spaces, the County will adopt a reserve classification system that clarifies the intent of management for different types of parcels.

Environmental Reserves- are lands that have environmental sensitivities and typically protect shorelines, steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands and treed or native grass areas.

Recreation Reserves- are lands that have the potential to be developed for future recreation facilities or services.

Utility Reserves- are parcels of land that accommodate existing or future utility infrastructure like sewer lines, water lines, waste disposal sites, sewage lagoons and lands for road widening.

9.2 Management of Existing Open Spaces

The majority of Open Spaces owned by Leduc County are classified as reserve lands. Management of the existing Open Spaces will support the intent of the reserves identified in the County's classification system (i.e. Environmental, Recreation, Utility)

The largest areas of environmentally sensitive lands within the County are either private property or managed by a variety of environmental agencies. The County's Open Spaces policies outline how the County will coordinate and support the management of significant environmental sites with landowners and other agencies.

Specific policy direction is outlined below.

Evaluation of Existing Reserves – Leduc County's reserve lands will be evaluated to consider their values and role within the County. Each parcel will be designated in accordance with the County's classification system (Environmental, Recreation, or Utility).





Environmental Reserves- All lands classified as Environmental Reserve will be kept in County ownership. Natural conditions will be allowed to prevail on Environmental Reserves, except if conditions have a negative impact on surrounding property (e.g. weeds)

Leasing of Environmental Reserve lands for purposes such as grazing or haying will only be considered if there are no negative environmental impacts. Fencing of Environmental Reserves will be implemented where unauthorized activities are causing environmental damage or there are complaints from adjacent landowners.

The Parks and Recreation Department will work closely with the Agricultural Services Department in management of Environmental Reserves.

The condition of Environmental Reserve lands will be monitored every two years. Actions will be taken to ensure continued protection of the sites as required (e.g. manage access, control weeds)

Adjacent landowners will be encouraged to monitor the Environmental Reserve lands and report problems to County staff.

A volunteer environmental stewardship program will be promoted with nearby land owners or interested parties to monitor larger sites and assist the County with management actions. The County will consider partnership agreements with organizations to lead the environmental stewardship of significant County sites.

Recreation Reserves- will be managed to allow their future use as public recreation sites. Actions like reclamation of disturbed sites to native vegetation will be considered. Leasing of recreation reserves for grazing or haying will be considered, so long as the land remains available and suitable for future recreation development. Use of Recreation Reserve lands for other purposes may be considered on a temporary basis where the long term use of the site for recreation is not compromised.

Fencing of recreation reserves will be implemented where unauthorized activities are causing environmental damage or there are complaints from adjacent landowners.

The Parks and Recreation Department will be primarily responsible for management of Recreation Reserve lands.

Utility Reserves- will be managed to support utility services, or to allow development of future utilities. Management of Utility Reserves will be the responsibility of the Public Works and Engineering Department.

Protect Shorelines- County reserve lands located along lake and stream shorelines will be classified as Environmental Reserves. All shorelines will be retained by the County in order to ensure public access opportunities are available to the waters edge and surface.





Shoreline reserves are also important for the environmental role they play in protecting water quality, minimizing shoreline erosion, and protecting fish and wildlife habitat.

A review of the County's existing *Lakeshore Environmental & Municipal Reserve Lands Policy* will be undertaken to address ongoing problems with replacement of private facilities on reserves and provide direction for future management by the County. Public input will be solicited on any revisions to the existing *Lakeshore Policy*.

The County will undertake ongoing monitoring and enforcement actions to protect shoreline reserves, in compliance with the *Lakeshore Environmental & Municipal Reserve Lands Policy*. The Parks and Recreation Department will direct the monitoring and develop enforcement policies with input from Planning and Development. The County's Special Constables will provide ongoing enforcement.

Evaluation of Pigeon and Wizard Lake Shorelines- A detailed evaluation of the County's reserve lands along Pigeon and Wizard Lakes will be undertaken by the Parks and Recreation Department. The evaluation will assess the condition of the reserves, current uses, and identify potential problems and solutions. Condition of the lake shorelines will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

9.3 New Open Spaces

Leduc County may take action to identify lands for protection by utilizing land use planning and other tools to ensure conservation of environmentally sensitive areas. The County may provide seed money for protection of specific conservation sites and work closely with other environmental agencies.

The primary method of identifying new Open Spaces in Leduc County will be through the efforts of environmental agencies, both government and non-government. Leduc County will work closely with these agencies to support protection of our natural environment.

Dedication of reserve land in new subdivisions is the principle method available to the County for acquisition of new Open Spaces. Reservations in new subdivisions will be pursued to support environmental protection, secure lands for future recreation development and for provision of utility services.

The Parks and Recreation Department will lead the County's management of existing Open Spaces, identification of new Open Spaces (with the Planning and Development Department) and liaison with other environmental agencies active within the municipality.

Specific policies and principles for the addition of new Open Spaces are outlined below.





Criteria for Identifying New Open Spaces-Leduc County will encourage and support protection of new Open Spaces that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Hazard lands (floodplains, steep slopes).
- Areas which perform vital environmental functions (watersheds, aquifer recharge areas).
- Areas of geological features.
- Features important for cultural, historical, prehistoric or archaeological reasons.
- Areas which contain significant, rare or endangered species.
- Areas which are unique habitats with limited representation in the region, or that represent remnant of previously abundant habitat.
- Areas which contain an unusual diversity of plant and/or animal communities.
- Areas of large relatively undisturbed habitats.
- Areas which contain plants, animals or landforms which are unusual or of significance.
- Areas which provide important linking functions and permit movement of wildlife over considerable distances.

Identify Open Spaces in Area Structure Plans-The location of new Open Space will be considered in the preparation of Area Structure Plans. Sites that meet one or more of the above criteria will be identified in Area Structure Plans as open spaces for protection.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas- Protection of sites identified as ESA's in the report *Environmentally Sensitive Areas Study: Leduc County* will be supported by Leduc County. Dedication of environmental reserve lands to the County in new subdivisions will consider identified ESA sites. Protection of ESA's by other agencies will be encouraged by Leduc County.

North Saskatchewan River Valley- The County will continue its policy of protecting the ecological integrity and scenic values of the River Valley. A long range Conservation Plan to protect the ecological values of the River Valley upstream of Devon will be pursued by the County. The Conservation Plan will be prepared in consultation with the Province of Alberta, the Counties of Parkland and Brazeau, as well as the Town of Devon.

The Conservation Plan may be undertaken in conjunction with the County's proposed Recreation Concept Plan that will guide future recreation development of the North Saskatchewan River.

Input to Land Use Planning- In order to identify opportunities for new open spaces, the Parks and Recreation Department will work closely with the Planning and Development Department in the ongoing review of land use plans and development proposals.

Reserve Lands in New Subdivisions- The following policies will guide the acquisition of new reserve lands.





• Environmental Reserves- Lands to be dedicated for environmental reserve will generally protect natural features such as shorelines, steep slopes, drainage courses, wetlands or water bodies, areas susceptible to flooding, ground water recharge areas, natural vegetation, and fish and wildlife habitat.

New emphasis will be placed on the dedication of environmental reserve lands that provide environmental linkages and connections between existing and new environmental areas. Linear corridors that provide environmental benefits may also provide recreational trail linkages so long as the environmental values are not compromised.

- Utility Reserves-Lands to be dedicated for utility reserves will provide current or future property for infrastructure such as storm sewer ponds, road widening, noise or visual screens and utility lines or corridors
- **Recreation Reserves-** In new industrial and commercial subdivisions, the County will continue its current practice of negotiating reserves considering land dedications, cash in lieu, or a combination of both.

In new residential subdivisions the County may consider land dedications for municipal reserve if the lands meet these criteria:

- to supplement environmental reserves along lakes and rivers,
- to protect habitat or vegetation not protected in environmental reserves,
- to provide ecological connections for vegetation continuity or wildlife corridors.
- where a developer wants to provide recreation facilities like trails or playgrounds.
- to provide linear connections to adjoining subdivisions.
- where residential development is concentrated as identified in an Area Structure Plan (e.g. Saunders Lake).
- where a direct demand for recreation services can be reasonably anticipated.

If these criteria are not met, the County may consider cash in lieu of land or a combination of land and money.

Land to be dedicated as Recreation Reserves will meet the following conditions:

- Public access to the land is available.
- Property is suitable for recreation with natural vegetation, good quality soils, flat or gently rolling topography, and in attractive natural surroundings.
- Lands provide access to the shoreline of major lakes, and river valleys.





- Lands provide opportunities for connection to nearby recreation lands or corridors.
- Site is not adjacent to major roads or other land uses that may diminish its use for future recreation.
- Development of New Recreation Reserves- In new subdivisions where reserve
 dedications are being taken, the developers will be encouraged to build
 appropriate facilities (e.g. landscaping, playgrounds, trails). Local subdivision
 residents will be encouraged to directly support ongoing maintenance of the
 facilities.

9.4 Regional Coordination of Open Spaces Management

There are several significant environmental sites within the County that are managed by other agencies. The County will support the environmental stewardship actions of these other agencies and coordinate County management with those other agencies as follows.

Coyote Lake Nature Sanctuary -is managed by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) to protect wildlife habitat and the watershed. NCC is interested in expanding the protected area to include the stream that drains from Coyote Lake to the North Saskatchewan River.

The County will support the work of the NCC to protect the Coyote Lake area as a significant environmental site. The County owns land along the North Saskatchewan River where the drainage from Coyote Lake enter the river valley. The County will work towards protection of the watercourse in its management of this land. The County will also encourage protection of the watercourse where it passes through private property.

Ministik Lake Bird Game Sanctuary-is managed by the Province of Alberta and Ducks Unlimited to protect wildlife habitat. The *Ministik Wildlife Management Plan and Implementation Plan* outline specific management direction.

Leduc County will support the direction expressed in the *Ministik Management Plan and Implementation Plan* namely:

- Primary management of site is for wildlife protection.
- Recreational trail use and timing is controlled.
- Only a limited number of trail access points will be allowed at specified locations.

In new land subdivisions near Ministik, the County will require fencing be installed that controls access from the subdivision into the Sanctuary. Subdivision residents will be encouraged to enter Ministik at the approved staging areas. A





vegetation buffer and greenway corridors that protect wildlife habitat will be requested as part of the subdivision design.

Leduc County's Centennial Park is in close proximity to Ministik. The County will manage Centennial Park and access through the Park to support the recreational trail activities inside Ministik.

Provincial Natural Areas-are managed by the Province of Alberta to conserve natural environments. The County will support the work of the Province to protect the Natural Areas in the County's management activities and through land use policies for private developments on lands adjacent to the Natural Areas.

Pigeon Lake Watershed-The Nature Conservancy of Canada is working on protection of two creek watersheds that drain into Pigeon Lake. The County will support the NCC initiatives to protect the watersheds and the water quality of Pigeon Lake.

Beaverhills /Cooking Lake Moraine- The Beaverhills Initiative is a new partnership organization that is working together through shared projects and coordinated actions to maintain the Beaverhills/Cooking Lake Moraine as a sustainable community. Leduc County participates in the Initiative and will continue to support the project as it evolves.

Ducks Unlimited- Ducks Unlimited has several projects on water bodies in the County that are intended to improve wildlife habitat. Leduc County will continue to support the conservation work of Ducks Unlimited across the County.

9.5 Areas of Interest for Future Open Spaces

Map 4 identifies locations of interest for consideration as new Open Spaces in Leduc County. Development in these areas will be limited or placed under a higher degree of environmental sensitivity and reclamation. The locations could be protected by Leduc County through dedication as Environmental Reserves in new subdivisions, or conservation agreements, or acquisition in partnership with other environmental agencies.

Areas of interest include:

Environmentally Sensitive Areas- Locations identified in the 1991 report *Environmentally Sensitive Areas Study: Leduc County* will be key sites for protection as Open Spaces.

Native Vegetation- Areas of remnant native vegetation including coniferous and deciduous forests and grasslands.





Waterfowl Habitat-Areas in the eastern portion of Leduc County that have high concentrations of nesting ducks per square mile.

Genesee-Luscar Mines and EPCOR Generation Inc. have identified land areas west of Secondary Highway #770 for long term reclamation to support wetland wildlife habitat. The County will support reclamation of these lands for habitat, and the connection of these lands towards the North Saskatchewan River Valley as wildlife corridors.

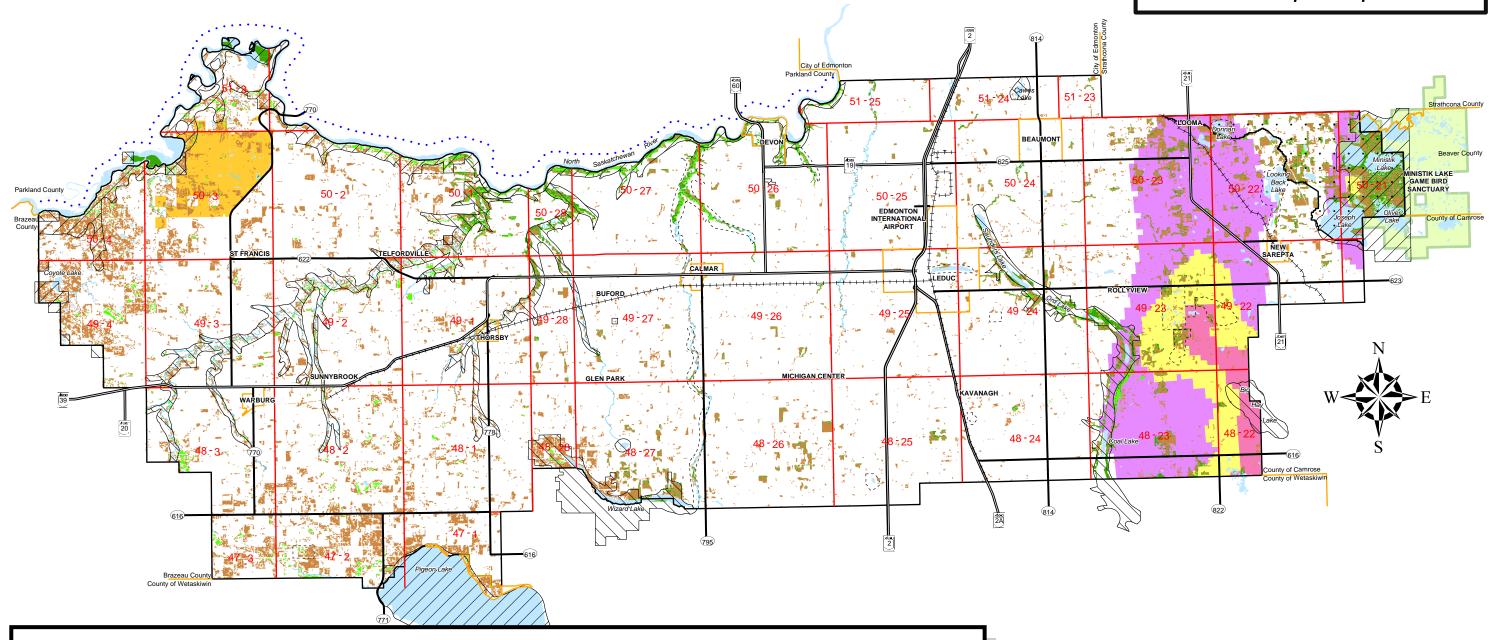
North Saskatchewan River Valley- Lands along the Valley with a variety of environmental sensitivities including steep slopes, native vegetation and wildlife corridors.

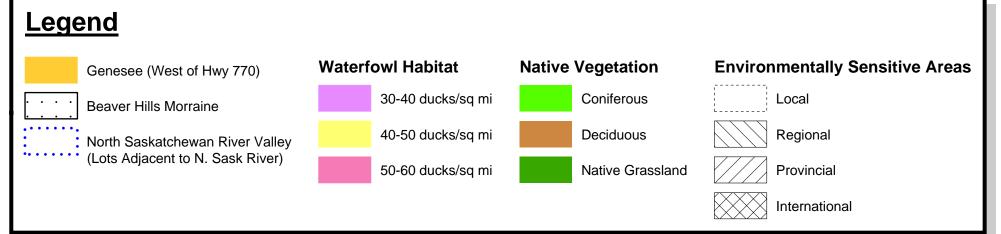
Beaver Hills/ Cooking Lake Moraine- is a rugged area of hills and lakes that is significant wildlife habitat and for groundwater recharge.



Parks and open spaces Master Plan

MAP 4
Areas of Interest for
Future Open Spaces







2005





10.0 Implementation

Implementation of the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan will take place over the next twenty years based on budget availability and priorities. Implementation of Master Plan priorities must also be considered in the context of priorities for other County infrastructure, programs and services.

10.1 Priorities

Priorities for implementation put emphasis in the redevelopment of the County's existing park facilities in the next ten years. After successful redevelopment of the existing parks, priorities will move towards establishing new County parks. Increased emphasis will be placed on initiatives to protect existing and new Open Spaces, typically in partnership with other agencies. The key implementation priorities from the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan are summarized in Table 2. Appendix 1 provides more details on the Master Plan Action Steps and priorities.





TABLE 2: PARKS AND OPEN SPACES MASTER PLAN KEY PRIORITIES

Complete by 2010	By 2015	By 2025	Ongoing
Existing Parks			
	Centennial and Jubilee Parks- Redevelop		
Genesee Park- Develop new facilities			
Gilwood Boat Launch- improve parking			
Mission Beach- relocate boat launch and close campground			
Nisku Recreation Centre Park- Prepare site plan			
Local Parks- repair or replace playgrounds, ball diamonds			
New Parks			
Rabbit Hill- prepare Concept Plan for new park	New Park- Establish new park in central portion of County	Genesee Reclamation- work with Luscar/Epcor on location for new park.	
Saunders Lake and Cawes Lake- Prepare Concept Plan for new parks			
North Saskatchewan River- Prepare a Recreation /Conservation Concept Plan			





TABLE 2: PARKS AND OPEN SPACES MASTER PLAN KEY PRIORITIES

Ongoing			Encourage major facilities in urban areas	Continue Regional partnerships		Regional Trails - Work with partners in development of trails		Monitoring-monitor shoreline reserves and environmental reserves			Regional Coordination - support initiatives by other agencies to protect Open Spaces	Environmental Reserves in New Subdivisions - new emphasis on environmental connections
By 2025												
By 2015						Trails in Parks- Develop trails in new parks.						
Complete by 2010	Regional Coordination	Improve access to North Pigeon Lake			Trails	Trails in Parks- Develop trails in existing parks.	Existing Open Spaces	Lake Shore Reserves- Implement County policy	Increase emphasis on protecting existing Open Spaces	New Open Spaces	Increase emphasis on protecting new Open Spaces	





10.2 Cost Estimates

Cost estimates are intended to give a preliminary indication of new or additional funds required to implement the Master Plan over the next 20 years. The estimates are in 2006 dollars and provide a general indication of the order of magnitude costs only. The cost estimates do not consider the future impact of inflation or the escalation of construction costs due to future economic conditions.

The cost estimates are summarized in Table 3. Appendix 1 provides more details on the Master Plan Action Steps and cost estimates.

TABLE 3: PARKS AND OPEN SPACES MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COST ESTIMATES 2005-2025

	Planning and Capital	New Operations (per year)
Redevelopment and Repair of Existing Parks	\$4,837,000	\$4,000
Establishing New Parks	\$4,200,000	\$80,000
Regional Coordination	\$200,000	\$40,000
Management of Existing Open Spaces	\$65,000	\$40,000
Establishing New Open Spaces	\$100,000	\$10,000
Financial Sustainability	\$20,000	\$150,000
Totals	\$9,422,000	\$324,000





10.3 Ensuring Financial Sustainability

Identification of funding is a key ingredient to providing quality parks and open spaces. Funding for operation of existing parks and capital investment in land and new facilities in Leduc County will be provided by utilizing the following strategies.

User Fees- As a general approach, user fees will be charged at park facilities to cover the majority of the annual operating costs. Charging user fees will reduce the amount of support required from general tax revenues.

Increase Use of County Equipment-In order to reduce the cost of construction and repair of Park facilities, greater use of County equipment will be encouraged. Park projects will be identified to Public Works and Engineering to be considered in the identification of overall priorities for County equipment. Agricultural Service will continue to assist with maintenance services in Parks and Reserves.

Municipal Reserve Trust Fund- money will continue to be placed in the Reserve Fund from the sale of surplus reserve lands, rental income from leased reserve lands, and dedication of cash in lieu of land in approval of new subdivisions. In accordance with the Municipal Government Act and County policy, these funds will be used to support existing and new parks and open spaces.

Existing Grants - the County will continue to apply for grant programs made available to assist with development of County parks and open spaces. Grant funds will be used primarily for capital investment in existing or new infrastructure. Utilization of grant programs allows the County to leverage County funds to provide a larger source of money for park and open spaces.

The majority of grants programs are run by the provincial and federal governments. Other grants may be available from specific foundations or organizations.

The Municipal Recreation and Tourism Assistance grant program currently provides annual grants to assist with operation of Centennial and Jubilee Parks. The MRTA grant program was originally designed to be 25 years in duration and the end of the program is approaching. Leduc County will actively encourage the Province of Alberta to continue the MRTA grant program and increase the grant amounts to reflect increased operational costs.

Regional Partnerships-The County will actively pursue new partnerships with other municipalities in the region to share funding responsibilities for development and operation of parks and open spaces that provide benefits to the broader regional population.

Non- Profit Partnerships- Several non-profit organizations already play an important role with the County in providing outdoor recreation facilities (e.g. Fish and Game





Associations, Community Associations). The County will continue to form alliances and partnerships with local organizations to support development and operation of outdoor recreation services.

New Infrastructure Grants-In 2004 and 2005 new municipal infrastructure grant programs were announced by the Federal and Provincial governments. Federal programs include the GST rebate, Municipal-Rural Infrastructure Fund and Canada Strategic Infrastructure Funds. The Alberta Municipal Infrastructure Fund is the new provincial program. Redevelopment of existing infrastructure in County Parks will be eligible for these grant programs, especially road and utility systems.

Growth Will Increase Property Assessment-As new private development occurs in the County, the overall property assessment will increase. Growth in the County's overall assessed property value will result in an increase in the amount of budget available for improving the County's system of Parks and Open Spaces. The County may also wish to consider increasing the funds available to support parks and open spaces by increasing the recreation tax rate that was .006% in 2004.

Facility Life Cycle Planning- A Facility Life Cycle Plan will be prepared for all Parks and Recreation assets in cooperation with the Public Works and Engineering Department. The replacement cost and life expectancy of all assets will be identified, along with the annual depreciation cost of the assets.

Based on the Facility Life Cycle Plan, an annual contribution will be transferred into a Capital Reserve Fund. The annual contribution will cover depreciation of the existing assets in County Parks and provide a source of funding for ongoing facility repairs and upgrading. Contributing on an annual basis will avoid cost spikes for major repairs, and the perpetual delaying of necessary repairs due to lack of annual operating funds.

Sale of Surplus Lands- The sale of surplus County lands is an ongoing practice of Leduc County. The County will review its present inventory of land holdings to identify sites that are surplus to the County's needs. Lands that play no major role and are unlikely to serve a future environmental, recreation or utility purpose will be classed as surplus. Surplus lands may be sold for other purposes.

Money raised from the sale of the surplus reserve lands must be placed in the Municipal Reserve Trust Fund to support existing and new parks and open spaces as required by the Municipal Government Act.

The sale of surplus County lands will only be considered under the following conditions:

- An inventory of all County lands is completed,
- Only selected properties where there is no current or future need for the land.
- Primarily lands that are outside subdivisions,
- Sale of municipal reserve lands in residential subdivision will only be considered if supported by subdivision residents,





• For lands classified as municipal reserves, a public hearing will be held in compliance with the requirements of the Municipal Government Act.

Debenture for Major Facilities-At present, major capital investments to build or repair Parks infrastructure are paid for from the Municipal Reserve Trust Fund. In future, the County may consider borrowing capital money for new facilities to spread the cost over a longer time frame. Park facilities can be expected to last many years and provide direct benefits to future taxpayers who will be responsible for paying off the debenture or borrowed money.

Sponsorships- A campaign to pursue individual and private sector sponsorships to support parks and open spaces will be initiated. The opportunity of making tax deductible donations to the municipality with suitable recognition of the donors may provide addition funding for existing or new parks and open spaces.

Private Sector Participation- Opportunities to increase private sector participation in the ongoing operation and development of public facilities will be investigated by Leduc County. The intent of the investigation will be to identify opportunities where cost efficiencies can be identified while continuing to provide quality public services.





ACTION 2006

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES MASTER PLAN

LEDUC COUNTY

APPENDIX 1

LEDUC COUNTY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

ACTION STEPS

The Action Steps provide a break down of all steps require to implement the Master Plan including priorities and Action Steps charts are a living document that will be reviewed and updated annually.





PARKS AND OPEN SPACES MASTER PLAN

LEDUC COUNTY

	Action	Priority				Cost Estimate		
		By	By	By	Ongoing	Planning &	New	
		2010	2015.	2025		Capital	Operations	
						\$	\$/year	
Section 7.2	Management of Existing Parks							
	Adopt a Park Classification System & Standards	X						
	Prepare management plan for Centennial Park	X				10,000		
	Prepare redevelopment plan for Centennial Park		X			20,000		
	Implement redevelopment plan for Centennial Park		X			1,800,000		
	Implement Jubilee Park Redevelopment Plan		X			2,800,000		
	Relocate launch at Mission Beach Day Use Area.	×				60,000		
	Close and reclaim Mission Beach Campground.	X				50,000		
	Increase attendance at Sunnybrook Creek Park	×						
	Develop facilities at Genesee Day Use Park (with EPCOR,	X				EPCOR	4,000	
	Luscar and Advisory Committee).							
	Improve parking conditions at Gilwood Boat Launch	X				000,09		
	Prepare site plan for Nisku Recreation Centre Park	X				15,000		
	Prepare redevelopment plan for Enchantment Valley	X				10,000		
	Evaluate playground equipment in local parks	X				2,000		
	Repair or upgrade Looma ball diamonds	X				10,000		
	Total Cost Estimate					4,837,000	4,000	





ACTION

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES MASTER PLAN

LEDUC COUNTY

Operations \$/year 80,00040,000 40,000 NewCost Estimate 2,000,000 2,000,000 4,200,000 100,000 50,000 50,000 Planning & Capital S Ongoing $\times | \times$ × × × By 2025 By 2015. Priority By 2010 × × × Prepare Recreation Concept Plan for Saunders Lake and Cawes Prepare Recreation Concept Plan for proposed regional park at Identify opportunities for new parks in Area Structure Plans Investigate/establish new park in northwestern portion of Prepare a Recreation/Conservation Plan for North Support North Saskatchewan River Valley access Establish a new park in central portion of County Continue participation in River Valley Alliance Saskatchewan River Valley upstream of Devon Provide input to land use planning Ensure lake access for recreation Emphasis on Day Use Facilities Priority for County Residents **Establishing New Parks** Total Cost Estimate Rabbit Hill site County Action Section 7.3





ACTION

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES MASTER PLAN

LEDUC COUNTY

	Action	Priority				Cost Estimate	
		By	By	By	Ongoing	Planning &	New
			2015.			Capital	Operations
						\$	\$/year
7.4	Regional Coordination of Park Management						
	Improve Day Use access to North Pigeon Lake	X				200,000	40,000
	Encourage major recreation facilities near urban areas.				X		
	Continue Regional Partnerships				X		
	Total Cost Estimate					200,000	40,000

	Action	Priority				Cost Estimate	
		By	By	By	Ongoing	Planning &	New
			2015.	2025		Capital	Operations
						\$	\$/year
Section 8.0	Section 8.0 Trail Development Policies						
	Provide trails in the development and redevelopment of County				X	Identified	
	parks.					redevelopment	
						plans	
	Link trails in County parks to regional trails				X		
	Work with partners in development of trails				X		
	Review County By-laws regarding trails		X				
	Total Cost Estimate						





ACTION

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES MASTER PLAN

LEDUC COUNTY

Action							
		Priority				Cost Estimate	
		By 2010	By 2015.	By 2025	Ongoing	Planning & Capital	New Operations \$/vear
Section 9.2 Managemer	Management of Existing Open Spaces						
Adopt an Op	Adopt an Open Spaces Classification System	×					
Evaluate role	Evaluate role of existing reserves	X				25,000	
Environmen	Environmental Reserves will be managed by the Parks and				×		
Recreation a	Recreation and Agricultural Services Departments						
Monitor con	Monitor condition of Environmental Reserves				X		
Promote an	Promote an voluntary stewardship program for Environmental				X		
Reserves							
Recreation F	Recreation Reserves will be managed by the Parks and				X		
Recreation Department	Department						
Recreation F	Recreation Reserves managed to support future public				X		
recreation use							
Utility Reser	Utility Reserves will be managed by the Public Works and				X		
Engineering	Engineering Department						
Utility Reser	Utility Reserves managed to support existing or future utility				X		
purposes							
Review exis	Review existing County policy on Lakeshore reserves	X				20,000	
Undertake sl	Undertake shoreline reserve monitoring program and take				X		
necessary en	necessary enforcement actions						
Prepare deta	Prepare detailed evaluations of Pigeon and Wizard Lake	X				20,000	
Shoreline reserves	serves						
Total Cost Estimate	Estimate					65,000	





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PARKS AND OPEN SPACES MASTER PLAN

LEDUC COUNTY

Operations 10,000 10,000\$/year Cost Estimate 100,000 100,000Planning & Capital Ongoing × × × × × × × By 2025 By 2015. Priority By 2010 In residential subdivisions, only accept recreation reserves that meet criteria. Otherwise accept cash in lieu or a combination. encourage the developer to landscape and provide recreation Place new emphasis on reserves that provide environmental Acquire environmentally sensitive lands as Environmental Acquire environmentally sensitive lands as Environmental Provide input on new Opens Spaces in land use planning In new industrial and commercial subdivisions, negotiate Continue policy of protecting North Saskatchewan River Support protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Where recreation reserves are accepted in subdivisions, reserves considering land dedication, cash in lieu or a Increase emphasis on protection of new Open Spaces Identify open spaces in Area Structure Plans Parks and Recreation Dept to take lead role Apply criteria to identify new open spaces Reserves in new subdivisions Reserves in new subdivisions Total Cost Estimate New Open Spaces combination. connections Vallev Action 9.3





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PARKS AND OPEN SPACES MASTER PLAN

LEDUC COUNTY

						Cost Estimate	
		By	By	By	Ongoing	Planning &	New
		2010	2015.	2025		Capital	Operations
						\$	\$/year
9.4	Regional Coordination of Open Spaces Management						
	Coordinate environmental management with other agencies				X		
	Support Nature Conservancy of Canada protection of Coyote				X		
	Lake and Coyote Creek to the North Saskatchewan River						
	Support Province of Alberta's management of the Ministik				X		
	Lake Bird Game Sanctuary						
	Support Province of Alberta's management of designated				X		
	Natural Areas						
	Continue participation in the Beaverhills Initiative				X		
	Support Duck Unlimited programs to protect wetland areas				X		
	Support the Nature Conservancy's conservation efforts in the				X		
	Pigeon Lake Watershed						
	Support EPCOR's reclamation efforts to provide wetland				X		
	habitat.						
	Total Cost Estimate						





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PARKS AND OPEN SPACES MASTER PLAN

LEDUC COUNTY

	Action		Pı	Priority		Cost Estimate	
		By	By	By	Ongoing	Planning &	New
			2015.	2025		Capital \$	Operations \$/year
10.3	Ensuring Financial Sustainability						
	User Fees				X		
	Increase Use of County Equipment				X		
	Municipal Reserve Trust Fund				X		
	Existing Grants				X		
	Regional Partnerships				X		
	Non-Profit Partnerships				X		
	New Infrastructure Grants				X		
	Growth will increase property assessment				X		
	Facility Life Cycle Planning	X				20,000	150,000*
	Sale of Surplus Lands	X					
	Debenture Major Facilities				X		
	Sponsorships				X		
	Private Sector Participation				X		
	Sponsorships				X		
	Total Cost Estimate					20,000	150,000*

^{*} Annual contribution to Reserve Fund based on assumption of \$3,000,000 in assets and allocation of 5% per annum to address depreciation and major repairs.

