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## Conservation of Biological Diversity

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**References:** *Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26 (MGA), s. 3 (a.1)*

**Cross-reference:** SER-012-011 Land Management

### Policy Statement

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Biological diversity is fundamental to sustaining life by supplying critical ecosystem services such as food provisioning, air and water purification, flood and drought control, nutrient cycling, and climate regulation. These services are essential to support our well-being and economic growth.

Strathcona County values the biological diversity within the natural environment and is committed to conserving a healthy, connected, and well managed ecological network.

Strathcona County has a responsibility to plan, protect, manage, and restore the natural environment to ensure healthy resilient ecosystems.

### Purpose

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The purpose of this policy is to guide conservation decision-making and act as a foundation for municipal actions to protect the air, water, land and biodiversity. Through the protection of lands with natural value and essential biological diversity, Strathcona County strives to provide places designated for the conservation of plant and animal species, for the conservation of habitat, for the reduction of air pollution, for the improvement of water quality, and for the recreational and cultural enjoyment of residents.

### Definitions

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Biological diversity (also termed Biodiversity) means the variability among living organisms – animals, plants, their habitats and their genes – from all sources including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part. This includes diversity within species, between species, and or ecosystems (from The International Union for the Conservation of Nature).

Conservation means the planning, management and implementation of an activity with the objective of protecting the essential physical, chemical and biological characteristics of the environment against degradation.

## Guidelines

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Strathcona County's conservation goal is to protect the integrity of our natural resources while providing opportunities for appropriate forms of use that will benefit the community. Our conservation goal includes:

- (a) maintaining viable sustainable populations of native plants and wildlife in their natural habitats;
- (b) identifying a network of conservation areas to promote the sustainable use of natural resources to enhance quality of life for all;
- (c) restoring and rehabilitating degraded natural resources, where practical;
- (d) developing and implementing management plans to ensure long term viability of the natural resources; and
- (e) educating the public on conservation and sustainability.

Strathcona County will actively take steps to add land with natural value and essential biological diversity to the County's land inventory, including the County's inventory of Municipal Reserves, Environmental Reserves, Conservation Reserves, Environmental Reserve Easements, Conservation Easements, and Legacy Lands.

Strathcona County will actively take steps to manage biodiversity to ensure a healthy, connected ecological network.

Strathcona County will actively take steps to restore degraded habitats to increase biodiversity and add to a healthy, connected ecological network.

Strathcona County will actively take steps to encourage stewardship actions that support biodiversity conservation on private land.

## Policy Record

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**Replaces:** N/A

**Administrative Review:** Planning and Development Services