



Terms of Reference

Revision Date: 30/10/19

VISION AND MISSION

Vision

Armstrong has wetland conservation areas where fish and wildlife can flourish and people can enjoy the natural wonders.

Mission

Our mission is to conserve a wetland area in Armstrong through land acquisition and to provide input to the City on green development for the remaining wetlands.

BACKGROUND

Geography

The older part of the City of Armstrong is a low-lying area with two major streams flowing through it, Meighan Creek and Deep Creek. These creeks and their tributaries have been diverted, channelized and culverted to accommodate infrastructure. In some areas, ditches have been built to drain water from surrounding wetlands for agricultural purposes. The result is a change to the hydrology.

As the City of Armstrong has limited supply of land for development, some of the wetlands have been developed over the years and encroachment continues.

The City of Armstrong lies in the unceded territory of the Syilx (Okanagan) & Secwepemc (Shuswap) Nations.

Challenges

- All the remaining wetlands are zoned for development or are located in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)
- There is a
 - lack of awareness on the urgency and threat of wetland loss in Armstrong
 - lack of awareness of the importance of wetlands
 - lack of land for future building sites within the City limits
- All remaining wetlands in Armstrong are privately owned

ARMSTRONG WETLANDS ASSOCIATION: FOCUS AND ACTIVITIES

Formed in 2018, Armstrong Wetlands Association (AWA) is an inclusive wetland conservation group dedicated to protecting wetlands in Armstrong. The AWA is a not-for-profit registered Society. Salient values include sustaining ecosystem integrity resulting in clean water and natural fish and wildlife habitat. This will encourage the reconciliation of the town's cultural and spiritual link with the wetlands.

AWA provides local leadership to secure wetlands for conservation. Our strategy is to work collaboratively with landowners, community members, First Nations, all levels of Government, and conservation organizations to maintain the legacy of wetlands in Armstrong.

AWA plans to raise the level of awareness of the importance of conserving wetlands through landowner outreach programs, workshops, newspaper articles and newsletters.

Our strategy to protect wetlands in Armstrong is as follows:

1. Get Organized

- Build a contact list of community members who are interested in wetland conservation, landowners, stakeholders, and potential project partners.
- Become a Society. This was completed on Dec 3, 2018, incorporated in British Columbia as the Armstrong Wetlands Association.
- Gather key information on historic and existing wetlands
 - i. Determine total hectares lost and total hectares of remaining
 - ii. Create a map and profile of remaining wetlands
- Contact local Land Trusts, conservation organizations (such as Ducks Unlimited), as well as the City of Armstrong to find out if the AWA is able to create an agreement with a landowner to sell the land at fair market value

and raise the majority of the funds (plus 20% of purchase price for a Stewardship Endowment¹) if they would be willing to be the landowner and land manager in perpetuity.

- AWA will introduce ourselves to the City of Armstrong and Township of Spallumcheen Councils, and will ask for their support in AWA's endeavors. AWA will meet with First Nation and all other groups who will be involved in this initiative.

2. Reach out to Landowners

Send an introductory letter to wetland landowners that introduces the AWA and provides information on conservation tools such as direct land purchase, conservation covenants, and bequeaths. Highlight potential benefits including tax breaks and leaving a community legacy.

3. Work with interested landowners and help fundraise to:

- sell their land to a conservation organization at fair market value or,
- sell their land to the City of Armstrong at fair market value or,
- create a conservation covenant (covenant could be held by Southern Interior Land Trust, North Okanagan Parks and Natural Areas Trust, or the Central Okanagan Land Trust) or,
- bequeath the land to a conservation organization or the City of Armstrong.

4. Celebrate the creation of an Armstrong Wetland Sanctuary

¹ A Stewardship Endowment is created by setting aside 20% of the purchase price in an endowment fund where the annual interest funds stewardship activities in perpetuity.