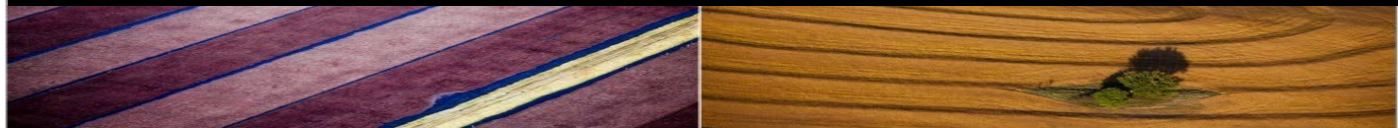




Protecting Canada's Farmland



Principles and beneficial practices of integrated agricultural land use planning solutions

Research Bulletin, June 2014

National study of agricultural land use planning launched

The purpose of this first issue of our research bulletin is to introduce you to our project and members. This national, three-year study will examine how the changing role and value of agriculture within Canadian society today might affect agricultural land use planning within and across national, provincial and local jurisdictions. We have three objectives: (1) To analyse the dominant policy regimes within Canada's agri-food system; (2) To undertake case studies of agricultural land use planning solutions; (3) To host a series of workshops focussed on applying beneficial practices in agricultural land use planning.

Our aim is to formulate policy recommendations for agricultural land use planning across Canada that help to conserve farmland and promote farming as the highest and best use of these lands. This project will contribute knowledge relating directly to agricultural land use planning and its impacts on the landscape and also build experience in working with a wide range of actors and bringing their diverse perspectives to converge on common topics of interest, such as farmer livelihoods, farmland preservation, food production, food sovereignty and food security.



Source: <http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/images>

For more information, visit our website:
blogs.unbc.ca/agplanning

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The purpose of this research bulletin is to help disseminate information and communicate results of on-going research on the status of agricultural land use planning in Canada.

Case Study Sites

The main focus of the research program is case studies of agricultural land use planning processes and outcomes in different regions across Canada. Our aim is to identify principles and beneficial practices that represent integrated land use planning solutions in rural, peri-urban, and urban areas that make a substantial contribution to protecting farmland.



Source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File>

NIAGARA REGION, ON

University of Guelph

The Niagara Region is a grouping of twelve municipalities located in Southern Ontario between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, west of the Niagara River. The Region's rural areas are characterized by a unique climate and Class 1 soils permitting the growth of specialty crops, including tender fruit and grapes. In 2005, the provincial government endorsed the Greenbelt Act, which has halted development on much of the Niagara Region's farmland. It is important to note, however, that not all agricultural land within the Region is protected by the Greenbelt, as much of southern Niagara has been excluded, although it is an area still subject to Ontario's Provincial Policy Statement.

HURON COUNTY, ON

University of Guelph

Huron County is located in Western Ontario on the southeast shore of Lake Huron and is comprised of nine lower tier municipalities. Huron County is considered a rural locale as the countryside is home to more than 50% of its inhabitants. The County is unique in terms of its population and farming style, as a burgeoning Anabaptist (Old Order Mennonite and Amish) community of farmers that employ small-scale farm strategies and work alongside larger farms that use modern equipment. Reporting the highest gross farm receipts in Ontario, agriculture in Huron County is a successful industry that produces more agricultural products than each of the four Canadian Atlantic Provinces. Huron County has a long history of agricultural land use planning that has predated and informed many provincial initiatives.

ROCKY VIEW COUNTY, AB

University of Lethbridge

Rocky View County is part of the Calgary Census Metropolitan Area and shares municipal boundaries with Calgary on the city's western, northern and eastern edges. Despite Rocky View's geographic proximity and close economic connections to the City of Calgary, the County is not part of the Calgary Regional Partnership but is still subject to urban-based and exurban pressures. While agriculture is the municipality's most extensive land-use activity, the County is also experiencing pressures from several resource extraction industries, most notably the energy sector. Rocky View is also regarded as one of the most progressive municipalities in the province in regards to agricultural land use planning, as it is the only one to have adopted an Agricultural Master Plan.

COUNTY OF GRANDE PRAIRIE, AB

University of Northern British Columbia

Located in northwest Alberta, the Upper Peace Region includes significant agricultural and forestry activities alongside increasing pressures from oil and gas developments. Fragmentation and degradation of farmland are primary issues in the Region. Within this region the case study will focus on the County of Grande Prairie, a rural area that is adjacent to British Columbia. A new initiative within the province to develop regional land use plans is providing new opportunities to address these agricultural land use planning issues.

THE CORPORATION OF DELTA, BC

University of Northern British Columbia

Delta is a municipality forming the southern part of the Metro Vancouver Regional District. Delta has three distinct and geographically disconnected areas: North Delta, Ladner, and Tsawwassen and is home to the Burns Bog, a naturally unique conservation area. 76% of all Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) land in Delta is currently farmed and produces 62% of all vegetable crops in the Metro Vancouver Regional District. Delta produced its first agricultural study in 1992, a rural land use study in 1994, and an agricultural plan in 2011. Due to its large farming community and proximity to metropolitan areas and, Delta is an ideal site to examine how land is allocated between competing uses in the context of farmland protection.

CENTRAL OKANAGAN REGION, BC

University of Northern British Columbia

The Central Okanagan Region is located in south-central British Columbia in the Okanagan valley and is known for its growth of tender fruits and grapes. The Region includes three municipalities (Lake Country, Peachland County, and West Kelowna) and borders the city of Kelowna, which is the third largest metropolitan area in the province. The Region adopted an Agricultural Plan in 2005 and has an Agricultural Advisory Committee to help oversee agricultural activities and decisions. The area is experiencing growing pressures to build rural estates that have affected how land is currently allocated and increased demands for non-farm uses.

BRANDON, MB

Brandon University

Located in south-western Manitoba, Brandon is the second largest city in the province. It has also had rapid growth since the building of a pork processing plant in 1999, which currently employs approximately 2,500 people. This growth has been a catalyst for other growth areas, including retail and service expansion. For the first time in decades, the boundaries of the city are stressed in all four directions. Land use planning has not yet included the loss of prime agricultural land or assessed the implications to the surrounding farming community.

PERMACULTURE SITE, MB

Brandon University

Within Brandon is a city-designated permaculture project that includes forest and food production. It is part of a Food Charter signed in April 2014 and can provide insights into a dimension not addressed specifically in the other selected case study sites: urban agriculture and the use of vacant urban lands that may be considered prime land for agriculture.

WINKLER & MORDEN, MB

Brandon University

These two communities are located in south-central Manitoba. Over the past 20 years, both communities, which are only 13 kilometres apart, have witnessed rapid expansion through immigration and relocation. The growth is both within community centres and in the immediate countryside. There are concerns that the spatial expansion to accommodate population growth has planning implications, including loss of prime agricultural land.

KINGS COUNTY, NS

Dalhousie University

The Province of Nova Scotia has expressed a desire to grow its agricultural sector and has recognized that in order to do this the productive agricultural land base must be protected. Kings County, which is home to 18% of all agriculture in Nova Scotia, is an important piece of the agricultural sector. Despite having had a land use policy planning strategy in place since 1979, the County has ongoing disputes among farmers, community members, and the local government. One issue is selling farmland for development. If these land use issues is not soon addressed then it may not be possible to sustain a viable agricultural sector in the County.

INVERNESS COUNTY, NS

Dalhousie University

Inverness is a tourist area located on the western side of Cape Breton Island. The County was part of the Antigonish Movement, which helped shape present farming activities. In contrast to King's County, this area highlights interesting issues in the Cape Breton context where agriculture is less prevalent on the landscape than it was in the past, which presents different challenges for agricultural land use planning in Nova Scotia.

RCM OF ROUSSILLON, QC

University of Montreal

The Regional County Municipality (RCM) of Roussillon is located on the south shore of the St Lawrence, and is part of the Metropolitan Region of Montreal. It is subject to urban growth pressures including the development of Highway 30. It has lands that are part of the agricultural reserves under the Provincial Commission for the Protection of Agricultural Land and Agricultural Activities, which aims to protect farmland in Quebec. In 2008, The RCM of Roussillon was selected as one of the 8 pilot RCMs to take part in a project to support the development plan for their agricultural zones. This program has now been extended across the province, although not all RCMs are involved to date.

RCM OF HAUT-RICHELIEU, QC

University of Montreal

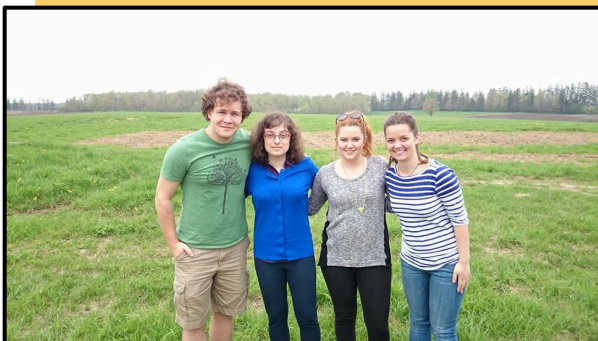
Regional County Municipality (RCM) of Haut-Richelieu, is to the southeast of the Montreal agglomeration and has not experienced the same level of urban pressures as has the RCM of Roussillon. It does, however, have substantial agricultural lands and activities in agricultural zones or reserves but does not yet have a development plan for these uses. It was selected as one of the case studies because it will allow the team to investigate why the pattern of involvement of the RCM and other actors has not been similar to that of the RCM of Roussillon.

ADDITIONAL CASE STUDY SITES

We are considering the addition of other case study sites, including St. John's Urban Region Agriculture Development Area in Newfoundland.



2014 spring project meeting in Guelph, ON



Graduate students visiting a Mennonite farm in Huron County, Guelph, ON

Meet the team...

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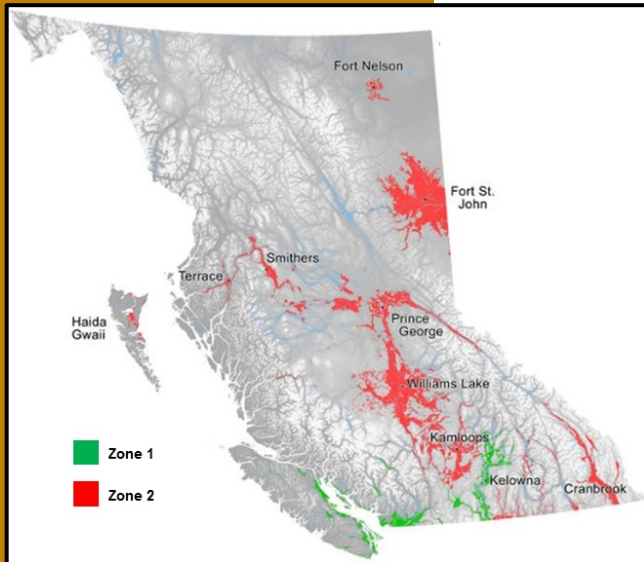
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ALR MAP: TWO ZONES



Source:

<http://commonsbc.tumblr.com/post/81210495193/bcs-farmlands-open-to-fracking-other-development>

BILL 24 FACTS:

- ALR land: 5% of total land base in BC
- Zone 1: 10% of ALR lands
- Zone 2: 90% of ALR lands

For more information about this study please contact
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AgLUP in the News

British Columbia Passes Bill 24

British Columbia passed its first legislation to protect farmland in 1973 under the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*. This Act established both the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) that protected all farmland in the province and the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), which was the governing agency to implement the Act. The mandate of the ALC was to protect farmland, encourage farming, and work with other governments to help support agriculture.

On May 29, 2014, the government passed Bill 24, which was a set of amendments to the Agricultural Land Commission Act. Bill 24 included four critical changes: divide the ALR into two zones; allow more non-farm uses on of ALR land in Zone 2; and decentralize decision-making authority of the ALC. In Zone 1, the ALC will continue to prioritise farmland protection. All other ALR

land outside these regions is now considered Zone 2, which accounts for the majority of ALR lands. When making decisions about ALR lands in Zone 2 the ALC, in addition to considering farmland protection, must now also consider local economic, cultural, and social values, regional planning objectives, and any other considerations that the provincial government may define.

The government's reason for the change is to provide farmers with the flexibility they need to incorporate non-farm uses on their land. Opponents to the changes argued that such flexibility is already provided and the government failed to provide any evidence to support their position.

The outcome of Bill 24 is that the level of farmland protection in British Columbia has been reduced, and this may have serious long-term consequences for agriculture and food in the province.

Quebec's New Food Sovereignty Policy

In May, 2013, the Province of Quebec adopted a food sovereignty policy that aims to address four key provincial interests: Quebec food identity, dynamic land occupancy, economic development in the agricultural sector, and sustainable development. According to the official press release, the new policy will ensure three main objectives:

- Ensure all Quebecers a supply of quality foods that are fairly priced and healthy;
- Increase the amount of local products eaten by Quebecers;
- Develop a bio-food sector that is thriving, lucrative, generates employment, respects the environment and contributes to dynamic land occupancy in Québec.

The policy also encourages government agencies to buy local, indicates a need to reduce pesticides, and plans to increase the protection of farmland in and around metropolitan centers. While initial critiques of the policy focus on a lack of details and specific measures the policy statement is also recognised as a progressive step for greater food sovereignty within Canada.

The information contained in this bulletin may be distributed freely with proper citation as follows:
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