



Pedestrian Access to the Bearspaw Reservoir

Electoral Division: 2

Project: N/A

Date:	March 12, 2024		
Presenter:	Steven Hulsman, Manager		
Department:	Asset Management		
Approved by:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Executive Director / Director	and/or	<input type="checkbox"/> Chief Administrative Officer

REPORT SUMMARY

On November 29th, 2023, Special Council Meeting, Council requested a review of access to the Bearspaw Reservoir to accommodate visitors from within the community and adjoining areas via municipal lands as shown on Attachment A.

MOVED by Councilor Deputy Reeve Kochan that Administration be directed to prepare a report to be presented to Council, no later than the end of Q1 2024, with additional information on the pedestrian access to the Bearspaw Reservoir.

ADMINISTRATION’S RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receives the Pedestrian Access to the Bearspaw Reservoir report for information.

BACKGROUND

The Bearspaw Reservoir along the Bow River is formed by the Bearspaw Dam. Originally constructed in 1954, TransAlta owns the dam and most of the shoreline surrounding the Reservoir. The reservoir is a source for drinking water used by approximately 1.4 million customers in the Calgary region, including over 6,000 County residents. The subject area is an adjacent County Municipal Reserve (MR) located in the community of Springbank, Attachment A.

On April 24, 2023, TransAlta requested County assistance, Attachment B, in installing appropriate signage on County lands clearly stating, “no access allowed to the Bearspaw Reservoir”. The request stemmed from an August 14, 2022, incident that occurred on the TransAlta lands whereby a person(s) fell on stairs, illegally constructed.

ANALYSIS

County Administration met with TransAlta representatives on January 9, 2024, to discuss the specific access outlined. TransAlta owns the land surrounding the reservoir and believes that the reservoir should be considered an industrial asset, not a recreational water body. Fluctuating water levels as a result of the operation of the reservoir pose significant safety risks and emergency response times are severely limited due to the lack of ingress/egress points.

Upon review of this information and the inability to accept liability by either party, it was confirmed that TransAlta would not permit access at this location. TransAlta did commit to future collaboration with the County on safe water access in their letter of response, Attachment C.

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To assist in future discussions, the County will reference the Parks and Open Space Master Plan, which identifies access to the Bearspaw Reservoir as a recreational opportunity while acknowledging limited access points as a constraint.

In addition, Rocky View County, TransAlta and the City of Calgary formed the Bearspaw Reservoir Trilateral Task Force in 2018 to proactively address water quality and public safety concerns. The Task Force will continue to collaborate, identifying and discussing risks, issues, and management options for the Bearspaw Reservoir, including pedestrian access.

COMMUNICATIONS / ENGAGEMENT

No communication or engagement is required.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

No Financial Implications.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Key Performance Indicators		Strategic Alignment
Effective Service Delivery	SD2: Services are resourced and delivered to specific groups as intended, and citizens are satisfied with the outcomes	SD2.1: Percent of citizens satisfied with the range of County services available/delivered
		The incorporation of access to the Bearspaw Reservoir will create a public recreation amenity for visitors. This will enhance the services provided to County's residents.

ALTERNATE DIRECTION

No alternative options have been identified for Council's consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Site Plan
- Attachment B: TransAlta Notification Letter
- Attachment C: TransAlta Letter of Decision