



Bearspaw Reservoir Taskforce Update

Electoral Division: 2 & 3

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Table with 2 columns: Field (Date, Presenter, Department) and Value (October 8, 2024, Ben Manshanden, Intergovernmental Strategist, Intergovernmental Services and Regional Planning)

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides an update to Council on recent progress made by The City of Calgary and Rocky View County on implementing the recommendations of the Bearspaw Reservoir Taskforce Consensus Report.

ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receives the Bearspaw Reservoir Taskforce Update 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 Bearspaw Dam is an operational electricity generation asset which generates enough electricity to power approximately 10,000 homes in the Calgary region.

This relatively pristine water source may be at risk of pollution due to urban growth, increased recreational demand, and other hazards. Safety hazards due to increased reservoir access also pose a concern. To address these emerging issues proactively, representatives from The City of Calgary, Rocky View County, and TransAlta formed a Trilateral Task Force in 2018, which worked collaboratively to discuss risks, issues, and management options for the Bearspaw Reservoir.

The purpose of the Task Force was to explore governance structures and identify methods to achieve a balance between human activities on or near the reservoir and the protection of water quality and public safety. The Task Force also sought to delineate roles and responsibilities and enhance working relationships between the parties to implement source water protection. The Report assessed potential risks to the reservoir and associated mitigation actions. The recommendations of the Bearspaw Trilateral Task Force Consensus Report were adopted by City and County Councils in 2019.

At the March 12, 2024, Rocky View County Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration be directed to continue to collaborate with TransAlta and The City of Calgary to implement the recommendations in the 2019 Bearspaw Reservoir Trilateral Task Force Consensus Report and determine suitable uses and locations for river access, and report back to Council by end of Q3 2024.

Since that time, City and County Administrations have successfully met on seven occasions to develop a Terms of Relationship and Project Milestones document. The goal of these documents is to guide the

Bearspaw Reservoir Taskforce Update

project team on next steps to fulfill the recommendations of the Trilateral Task Force Consensus Report. Once these documents have been finalized administratively for approval, they will be referred to the Intermunicipal Committee meeting for review. This is anticipated before the end of 2024.

ANALYSIS

The Bearspaw Reservoir Taskforce Terms of Relationship will provide a governance structure to support efforts between The City of Calgary and County Administrations to fulfill the recommendations of the Bearspaw Trilateral Task Force Consensus Report. It will set out the purpose of the taskforce, the scope of work, and define roles and responsibilities for both parties. The overall goal is to enable the project team to work effectively and collaboratively to fulfill its mandate.

The Bearspaw Taskforce Project Milestones document will articulate how the parties implement the Trilateral Task Force Consensus Report recommendations. The workplan will identify milestones over a 24-month period that includes seven action areas, including public education, public engagement, mapping, project planning, emergency management discussions, and the ultimate development of a management strategy which balances recreational use of the reservoir with public safety concerns. The Project Milestones document will form the basis for a detailed workplan for each action area and associated resource requirements, risk mitigation, and tasks via a project chartering process.

The City and County are working to develop a balanced approach for use of the Bearspaw Reservoir, which focuses on low-cost, high-impact actions to ensure public safety when using the reservoir and protecting water quality for City, County, and regional water customers. The parties will work closely with TransAlta and other stakeholders to ensure that their voices are heard throughout the development of a Bearspaw Reservoir management strategy. To this end, workplan outlines a public engagement strategy to educate interested parties on the importance of the reservoir for providing clean drinking water to the City and balancing demand for recreation with public safety. Administration is confident that this approach will account for the interests of all parties and ensure increased certainty for resident groups interested in pursuing recreational opportunities.

COMMUNICATIONS / ENGAGEMENT

There are no direct communications or public engagement associated with this report. The project workplan will include a public education campaign on the importance of the Bearspaw Reservoir for regional water systems, as well as current limitations for emergency response on the reservoir. It will also include public engagement on a draft management strategy in 2025 that will be funded equally by The City and County via existing budgets.

IMPLICATIONS

The proposed workplan will strengthen the County's relationship with The City of Calgary, improve ecosystem resiliency, and provide increased certainty for residents seeking recreational opportunities on the Bearspaw Reservoir. This initiative may also strengthen the County's emergency response capacity on the Bearspaw Reservoir through improved coordination with The City of Calgary.

Financial

There are no financial implications associated with this report. Any costs associated with the workplan can be accommodated through existing budgets in the upcoming fiscal year.

Bearspaw Reservoir Taskforce Update

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: Citizens satisfied with the range of County services available/delivered	This initiative may assist with addressing requests from resident groups for increased recreational opportunities on the Bearspaw Reservoir.
Effective Service Delivery	SD3: Citizens are satisfied with Public Engagement opportunities and availability of information	SD3.2: Citizens satisfied with the public engagement opportunities provided by the County	This initiative proposes to engage with residents and other stakeholders to ensure the appropriate balance between recreational opportunities and public safety.
Effective Service Delivery	SD4: Services are continually assessed for improvements in cost efficiency, effectiveness, and customer experience	SD4.1: Services that are assessed annually for innovation opportunities and have demonstrable efficiency improvements	This joint initiative is intended to ensure enhanced collaboration between The City and County with respect to natural assets and opportunities for synergies between the parties.

ALTERNATE DIRECTION

No alternative direction has been identified for Council's consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments.

APPROVALS

Manager:	Amy Zaluski, Director, Intergovernmental Services and Regional Planning
Executive Director/Director:	Amy Zaluski, Director, Intergovernmental Services and Regional Planning
Chief Administrative Officer:	Byron Riemann