



POLICY MANUAL

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| <p>Legal References:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A | <p>Policy department: Parks and Recreation</p> |
| <p>Cross References:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bylaw #3061 – Parkland Conservation Bylaw #3023 – Off-Highway Vehicle Bylaw Bylaw #3122 – Regional Fire Services Bylaw Bylaw #3098 – Community Standards Bylaw | <p>Policy Number: K-18</p> |
| <p>Adoption Date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> November 15, 2021 – CM#20211115.004 <p>Revision Date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of Motion and Motion # | <p>Policy Title: Recreational Use of Stormwater Ponds</p> <hr/> <p>Review Date: In accordance with Policy B20: Mandatory Review of Policies</p> |

POLICY PURPOSE:

The objectives of the policy are:

- To establish criteria for recreational uses of Stormwater Ponds.
- To increase the public’s overall awareness and understanding of recreational uses of stormwater ponds.
- To ensure stormwater ponds are used for recreation in a manner with the least amount of risk.

DEFINITIONS:

Stormwater Ponds: Are typically artificial bodies of water situated on municipal reserve land with the primary function of providing storm sewer overflow retention. For the purpose of this policy, stormwater ponds shall be limited to those ponds directly located within residential neighbourhood parks and/or readily identified as being used for recreational purposes by the public. Other bodies of water located in industrial areas, naturally occurring wetlands, private dugouts or any other unnoted body of water located in the county are not considered part of this policy.

Non-contact water activities: Any recreational activities which restrict direct body contact with the stormwater in the pond.



Red or High-Risk Zones: The areas of the stormwater pond which are identified as thin ice zones and are typically adjacent to the inlet and outlet locations in the pond.

Special Events: An event held in or around the stormwater ponds, both in neighbourhoods as well as those ponds not typically located within a neighbourhood (i.e. Sportsplex stormwater pond), and which anticipate drawing a significant number of spectators and/or participants.

Volunteer Group: Is a formal neighbourhood association or an informal group of four or more people who voluntarily offer him/herself to perform a service willingly and without compensation. If any member of the Volunteer Group moves out of the neighbourhood, a replacement must be found to meet the minimum requirement of four people under this policy.

Contact Person: Is the designated member of the Volunteer Group who is responsible for communicating on the group's behalf. An alternate Contact Person must also be identified on the application form as number "2" under this policy. The primary Contact Person will be responsible for communicating concerns of conditions to the County of Grande Prairie No. 1.

POLICY STATEMENT AND GUIDELINES:

The County will permit limited recreational use of stormwater ponds.

Subject to conditions outlined in this policy, the approved stormwater ponds identified in Schedule A may be used for winter ice activities such as skating, broomball, and shinny, and non-direct contact water activities in the summer. These summer activities include non-motorized boating with boats propelled solely by human power such as paddle boats, kayaks or canoes.

Since stormwater ponds help control flooding during heavy rainstorms, water quality cannot be guaranteed because the ponds collect road and street runoff. The County of Grande of Prairie does not monitor the water quality in any County stormwater pond. Therefore, stormwater ponds are not recommended for use for activities such as swimming, wading, fishing, boardsailing, water skiing, scuba diving, and any use of inner tubes and small inflatable or any activities that may result in direct contact with the water.

This Policy governs:

1. **Approved Stormwater Ponds:** The Parks & Recreation department will be responsible for determining on an annual basis, which stormwater ponds are included in Schedule A. This decision will be based on accessibility to the pond, immediate resident interest in accessing the pond, willingness of volunteer groups within the residential community, presence of additional stormwater ponds within the same subdivision, and resources within the Parks and Recreation department. Approved stormwater ponds for winter and / or summer use will be identified on the County of Grande Prairie website.



2. **Visual Evaluation of Physical Properties of Stormwater Ponds:** Shall be carried out by the Parks and Recreation department during the summer season and will be conducted every two years to document any possible changes in the high-risk zones. Stormwater ponds that have not changed after two reviews and show no tendency to change will be put on a five-year cycle to review.
3. **Restrictions for Summer Recreational Use on Approved Stormwater Ponds:** For public safety, any activity that may result in direct contact with water in stormwater ponds is not recommended. The County of Grande Prairie makes no representation on the quality of water in the stormwater pond. Any interested group or individual will be allowed to spontaneously use Stormwater ponds for non-direct contact activities at their own risk. Non-direct contact summer activities include boating activities with boats propelled by electric, wind or human power such as paddle boats, kayaks or canoes.
4. **Ice Thickness Evaluation/Management:** Shall be carried out by the Parks & Recreation staff, with support from Regional Fire department as available, during the onset of winter until sufficient ice thickness has been reached. Specifically, the ice must be 20 cm to allow people to recreate on it, and 25 cm to allow approved snow clearing equipment on it. If there are significant temperature fluctuations ice thickness evaluations may be performed on a more frequent basis. A news release will be issued to update the public on the results of the ice testing and will indicate when the ice has reached acceptable ice thickness levels. Signage will also be posted at the location to verify ice thickness levels and provide other appropriate information.
5. **Restrictions for Winter Recreational Use on Approved Stormwater Ponds:**
 - a) Users must obey posted signs relevant to ice safety and ice thickness.
 - b) Ice thickness will be monitored on an ongoing basis – once it has reached an acceptable level of thickness (20 cm or greater) warning signs are removed or covered and the stormwater pond is open for use at the user’s discretion and risk.
 - c) Any interested group or individual will be allowed to spontaneously use storm water ponds for winter activities at their own risk.
 - d) Motorized vehicles, Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) or lawn tractors are not permitted on the ice. Small, push-model snow blowers are permitted. Any other ice clearing or flooding activities will be approved by special permission only from the Parks & Recreation department.
6. **Restrictions for Special Events on Approved Stormwater Ponds:**
 - a) All persons are required to make an application to the Parks & Recreation department for permission to host the special event and receive approval to proceed.



- b) Members of the group organizing the event are required to have the applicable insurance and indemnity agreements in place.
7. **Special Consideration for Other Allowable Uses on Approved Stormwater Ponds:**
- a) Administration recognizes there are also situations where it is advantageous to consider other allowable uses for the stormwater ponds. For all special consideration requests, the restrictions noted under “Restrictions for Special Events” above also apply.
 - b) The County may for any purpose, close or restrict access to an approved stormwater pond for any length of time as deemed necessary.
8. **Volunteer Group Responsibilities for Approved Stormwater Ponds for Winter Use:**
- a) A volunteer group is required to complete a Stormwater Pond Volunteer Group application form (Schedule B) for each stormwater pond they wish to commit to partnering with the County of Grande Prairie on.
 - b) Volunteer groups will coordinate a minimum of four volunteers and designate one main contact person and one alternate.
 - c) The volunteer group is solely responsible for the snow clearing and reasonable maintenance of the ice surface. Absolutely no motorized vehicles, OHV’s or lawn tractors are permitted to be used for any maintenance on the ice surface. Small, push-model snow blowers are permitted. Any other equipment requires the approval of the Parks & Recreation department.
 - d) The volunteer group, and general public as a whole, are responsible for immediately reporting any concerns regarding ice thickness or other safety issues regarding the stormwater pond, to the Parks & Recreation department (weekdays) or Regional Enforcement Services (evenings and weekends).
 - e) The volunteer group will be required to ensure the ice surface does not interfere with the reasonable enjoyment of resident’s use of Municipal Reserve or greenspace lands
 - f) The volunteer group will be required to ensure that emergency access routes are clear to the ice surface site at all times.
 - g) Fire barrels or fire pits are not permitted on the stormwater pond ice surface under any circumstances.
9. **Recognition of Risk:** Any advisories or signage regarding existing ice thickness on stormwater ponds are provided as information only and are limited to the time and date of measurement and is not a representation that the ice is safe to use for any purpose. Persons using the ice surface are advised to beware that the ice may become unstable at any time, and that ice thickness may change at any time for a variety of reasons, some of which are unpredictable. Anyone using the stormwater pond for any purpose, winter or summer, does so at their own risk. Signage stating Recognition of Risk will be posted at each stormwater pond approved for recreational use.



10. Winter Maintenance of Approved Stormwater Ponds:

Volunteer groups or members of the public who may use the ice surface spontaneously assume all maintenance responsibilities such as:

- Preparation of the ice surface once approved for use (e.g. flooding ice, shoveling snow, etc.)
- General upkeep of the surrounding area
- Removal of all items, equipment and debris at the end of the season (e.g. nets, garbage cans, benches etc.)

The County of Grande Prairie is not required to perform any maintenance responsibilities under the terms of this policy, outside of ice thickness evaluation, emptying garbage cans and the placement of signage by the Parks & Recreation department. The County is committed to the following milestones:

- a) **Visual Pre-site Inspection:** Upon receipt of an application from a volunteer group and as part of the acceptance process for the stormwater pond as an approved location under Schedule A. This will include identification of high-risk zones (e.g. inlets, outlets, etc.).
- b) **Commencement of Freezing Temperatures:** Place caution signs at approved stormwater pond locations and begin regular ice thickness sampling until ice reaches a minimum of 20 cm and is declared safe for skating.
- c) **Ice Suitable for Use:** Upon meeting ice thickness requirements, place Recognition of Risk signs to indicate that stormwater pond is suitable for winter use. Make media announcements to advise public. Emergency ice rescue kit placed at each location.
- d) **Regular Inspections:** To ensure ice depth and determine if ice strength meets safety requirements. Check that signage and emergency ice rescue kit are still in place. Update signage to indicate date ice was last tested on.
- e) **End of Season:** When ice is no longer considered safe to skate on, communicate to users through signage on site, media releases and directly to volunteer groups.
- f) **Safety Equipment:** Provide one ice rescue kit per approved stormwater pond for emergency public use.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Council is responsible for:

- Reviewing and Approving policies.

Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring that County personnel follow all steps of this policy.

Directors Of Community Services is responsible for:

- Administering this policy, ensure all requirements are met, and recommend updates to the policy as required
- Managing issues of concern or non-compliance
- Ensuring employees are educated and trained on this policy.
- Supervising and Supporting Parks and Recreation department in policy implementation.

ETHICS AND CODE OF CONDUCT:

All County staff will comply with the County Personnel Policy, in particular sections concerning conflict of interest and confidentiality. Any staff member found to be acting in non-compliance is subject to disciplinary action.

COMPLIANCE

The use and interpretation of all County Policies and schedules will comply with all aspects of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP), the County of Grande Prairie's Records Management Policy and any other applicable legislation, Regulation or Act.

Non-compliance of County policies may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

POLICY AUTHORITY:

The Chief Administrative Officer has the authority to amend the related Schedules of Policy K18 from time to time to keep current, enforceable and compliant with statutes and legislation in the Province of Alberta. Any changes to the Policy must be approved by Council.

ATTACHMENTS:

Schedule "A" – Approved Stormwater Ponds

Schedule "B" – Stormwater Pond Volunteer Application

Schedule "C" – General Guidelines for Recreation on Stormwater ponds



SCHEDULE "A"

Approved Stormwater Ponds: The Parks & Recreation department will be responsible for determining on an annual basis, which stormwater ponds are included in Schedule A. This decision will be based on accessibility to the pond, immediate resident interest in accessing the pond, willingness of volunteer groups within the residential community, presence of additional stormwater ponds within the same subdivision, and resources within the Parks and Recreation department. Approved stormwater ponds for winter and / or summer use will be identified on the County of Grande Prairie website.



SCHEDULE "B"

(This information will be transposed into an online form that will be available through the County website)

Recreational Stormwater Pond Winter Volunteer Application

This program enables residents to use approved stormwater ponds in County residential subdivisions for recreational use.

Applications are accepted until December 31, 2021 (during initial pilot year)

An existing neighbourhood association or volunteer group with at least 4 dedicated residents must be named on the application. This group will be solely responsible for snow clearing and responsible maintenance of the ice surface. The County will provide oversight and regular ice thickness testing but will not be involved in the operation of the ice surface.

These ice surfaces are intended to be recreational and accessible to all residents and the public.

Review the full Terms and Conditions prior to beginning an application.

1. Indicate the Residential Stormwater Pond and area of pond intended for winter recreation:
2. Is the Applicant an existing Neighbourhood Association?
3. Name of Contact Person 1
4. Phone Number of Contact Person 1
5. Email of Contact Person 1
6. Full Name and Phone Number of Volunteers. Must have at least 3 volunteers in addition to the Contact Person
 - a. Contact 2
 - b. Contact 3
 - c. Contact 4
 - i. Option to add additional Contacts

Electronic Signature

Protection of Privacy - Personal information is collected in accordance with Section 33(c) of the Alberta *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (the FOIP Act) and will be protected under Part 2 of that Act. It will be used for the purposes of administering the program or service for which the information is collected. Should you require further information about collection, use and disclosure of personal information, please contact the FOIP Coordinator at foip@countypg.ab.ca or call 780-532-9722.



SCHEDULE "C"

GENERAL RULES FOR RECREATIONAL USE OF STORMWATER PONDS

- Obey all notices and posted signs
- No animals running at large
- Quiet time is 10:00 PM to 7:00 AM daily
- No person shall disturb the rest, peace or enjoyment of any other person at any time
- No Off Highway Vehicles may be operated on the stormwater pond ice surface
- No fire barrels or fire pits on the stormwater pond ice surface
- Litter deposited in provided litter receptacles only
- Discharge of fireworks is prohibited
- Harassment of wildlife is prohibited (Wildlife Act)
- Damaging, defacing or removing County property is prohibited (Criminal Code of Canada)
- Adherence to all traffic safety laws is required (Alberta Traffic Safety Act)
- Criminal breeches will not be tolerated (Criminal Code of Canada)
- Nuisance behaviour will not be tolerated. This includes:
 - Use of obscene, offensive or insulting language;
 - Fighting or disorderly conduct;
 - Excessively loud or disruptive noise or music at any time;
 - Any conduct that takes place either within or outside of a greenspace stormwater pond area, which in the opinion of a Peace Officer infringes upon the peace, quiet and enjoyment of any other Person.

(Note: some or all of this information may be used to display at approved County stormwater ponds for recreational purposes.