

ANTELOPE CREEK RANCH

STRATEGIC

PLAN

2008 - 2018

**PREPARED BY THE ANTELOPE CREEK RANCH
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

MARCH, 2008

Antelope Creek Ranch Strategic Plan: 2008 – 2018

THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Antelope Creek Ranch (ACR) Strategic Plan contains the vision, mission, goals, and objectives developed for the Ranch by its Management and Technical Committees. The attached Appendix provides direction for implementation of this Strategic Plan.

VISION STATEMENT

To improve the health of Alberta's prairie ecosystems while maintaining the benefits which society derives from its use of these landscapes.

MISSION

Use the ACR as a demonstrative and educational tool to show land users and resource managers how to manage and integrate agricultural, recreational and industrial use of the prairie landscape to optimize the societal benefits derived from this landscape while maintaining its health and the integrity of its ecosystems.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Ranch will become a showcase for sound, integrated, economically successful, and environmentally sustainable state-of-the-art management and be used to teach and encourage other ranchers and land managers to use similar strategies. Partnerships will play a key role in fulfilling the Ranch's Mission.

GOAL 1: MAXIMIZE THE TRANSFER OF INFORMATION FROM ACR TO RANCHERS, OTHER RESOURCE USERS AND DEVELOPERS OF THE MIXED GRASS PRAIRIE.

Objective 1: Improve the profile of the Ranch and provide enhanced outreach programs to the ranching, industrial and recreational communities.

Objective 2: Staff conducting outreach activities will be aware of current expertise on the Ranch's ecosystems, land uses and land management practices.

GOAL 2: ENSURE THAT THE RANCH IS ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE.

Objective 1: Ensure that the Ranch's management practices sustain the ecosystems and biodiversity of the dry mixed grass prairie.

Objective 2: Identify and correct existing ecological problems on the Ranch. The percentage of disturbed land will be decreased. Invasive species will be controlled. Identify and correct the impacts of past oil and gas development.

Objective 3: Identify and proactively address developing or future problems. Ensure that future land use activities are conducted in an ecologically sustainable manner.

GOAL 3: MINIMIZE THE IMPACTS OF INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES AND INTEGRATE THESE ACTIVITIES TO MINIMIZE THE ACCUMULATED IMPACT AND FOOTPRINT.

Objective 1: Each resource user will use the resources provided by the Ranch in a way which minimizes the impacts on the ranch ecosystems while optimizing the benefits derived by all users.

Objective 2: The activities of the various resource users will be integrated and coordinated to minimize the negative impacts which they have on each other and the Ranch's ecosystems.

GOAL 4: EXPAND THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL PARTNERS IN ADDRESSING THE RANCH'S ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES.

GOAL 5: FACILITATE THE USE OF THE RANCH FOR RESEARCH.

Objective 1: Enhance staff expertise through their facilitation of research programs conducted on the Ranch.

Objective 2: Facilitate research which will assist the Ranch in attaining its Mission and further our understanding of prairie ecosystems.

GOAL 6: MANAGE RANCH GOVERNANCE, STAFFING AND FINANCES TO PERPETUATE THE ACR AS AN EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND ECONOMICALLY SELF-SUSTAINING ENTITY.

Objective 1: Ranch governance will be reviewed at the completion of this Strategic Plan and at a minimum, every three years during the life of the Plan.

Objective 2: Ranch staff will be recognized for the major role they play in the Ranch meeting its objectives.

Objective 3: The Ranch will be economically self-sufficient by 2020.

APPENDIX 1

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR THE ACR STRATEGIC PLAN

The following steps and strategies provide direction for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. They are not all inclusive. Innovation and creativity are encouraged to expand upon the ideas and strategies identified below.

GOAL 1: MAXIMIZE THE TRANSFER OF INFORMATION FROM ACR TO THE RANCHERS, OTHER RESOURCE USERS AND DEVELOPERS OF THE DRY MIXED GRASS PRAIRIE.

Objective 1: Improve the profile of the Ranch and the outreach programs to the ranching, industrial and recreational communities.

Strategies:

1. Develop an ACR Extension Plan by January 1, 2009 which will consider strategies such as:
 - Develop Ranch champions
 - Use press releases
 - Expand Ranch Manager role (off-site)
 - Use post-secondary institutions for increasing exposure
 - Use economic benefits as motivator
 - Develop a website and keep it updated
 - Use signage/brochures
 - Assess the feasibility of developing videos
 - Gain political exposure
 - Scholarships
 - Promote the use of the Ranch as a demonstration site for interested groups
 - Effective signage on the Ranch
 - Develop an annual schedule by April 1

Objective 2: Staff conducting outreach activities will be aware of current expertise on the Ranch's ecosystems, land uses and land management practices.

Strategies:

1. Create and maintain an inventory of studies conducted on ACR and other relevant information.
2. Use external expertise (Alberta Fish and Wildlife, Alberta Agriculture, Ducks Unlimited, University, Industry, etc.) as necessary in the Ranch's extension programs.

GOAL 2: ENSURE THAT THE RANCH IS ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE.

Objective 1: Ensure that the Ranch's management practices sustain the ecosystems and biodiversity of the dry mixed grass prairie

Strategies:

1. Define (benchmark) ecological sustainability. This benchmark will address the quality of upland and aquatic habitats and the amount and distribution of man-caused disturbance.
2. Conduct an audit to determine if the ACR is ecologically sustainable now
3. If not, modify Best Practices to achieve sustainability
 4. If Best Practices cannot produce sustainability, modifications to the level of use may be necessary
5. Once sustainability is achieved, maintain it
 6. Work with oil and gas companies and other ranch users to ensure that they understand this objective and do their part.

Objective 2: Identify and correct existing ecological problems on the Ranch. Decrease the percentage of disturbed land. Control invasive species. Identify and correct the impacts of past oil and gas development.

Strategies:

1. Develop baseline inventory of current disturbance and invasive species
2. New disturbance will be accompanied by reclamation/restoration at a rate of three units (kms or acres) of reclamation : 1 unit of new disturbance
3. Assess the impacts of past oil and gas development and work with industry to develop and implement corrective measures where appropriate.
4. Develop and implement a Reclamation Plan which will address invasive species and man-caused disturbances by January 1, 2009.
5. Monitor success and modify as appropriate
6. Cooperate with local communities and authorities
7. Work with oil and gas companies and other ranch users to ensure that they understand this objective and do their part.

Objective 3: Identify and proactively address developing or future problems. Ensure that future land use activities are conducted in an ecologically sustainable manner.

GOAL 3: MINIMIZE THE IMPACTS OF INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES AND INTEGRATE THESE ACTIVITIES TO MINIMIZE THE ACCUMULATED IMPACT AND FOOTPRINT.

Objective 1: Each resource user will use the resources provided by the Ranch in a way which minimizes the impacts on the ranch ecosystems while optimizing the benefits derived.

Strategies:

1. Acquire and implement Best Practices for agriculture, industry and recreation which are appropriate for the circumstances encountered on the Ranch (wetland and upland).
2. Develop and implement a Wetland Management Plan.
3. Encourage increased engagement of the major Ranch users, particularly oil and gas in the operation of the Ranch.
4. Increase involvement of the Public Lands Industrial Management Section.

Objective 2: The activities of the various resource users will be integrated and coordinated to minimize the negative impacts which they have on each other and the Ranch's ecosystems.

Strategies:

1. Hold regularly scheduled meetings between ACR land users to exchange information and coordinate activities.

GOAL 4: EXPAND THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL PARTNERS IN ADDRESSING THE RANCH'S ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES.

Strategy:

- 1: Place particular emphasis on the role of external partners in the review of Ranch governance (Goal 6).

GOAL 5: FACILITATE THE USE OF THE RANCH FOR RESEARCH.

Objective 1: Enhance staff expertise through their facilitation of research programs conducted on the Ranch.

Objective 2: Facilitate research which will assist the Ranch in achieving its Mission and furthering our understanding of prairie ecosystems.

Strategies:

1. Facilitate the use of the Ranch as a site for academic research. Emphasis should be placed on applied research which is pertinent to management issues or knowledge gaps faced by the Ranch.
2. Universities and other research groups should be made aware of the opportunities for research at ACR.

GOAL 6: MANAGE RANCH GOVERNANCE, STAFFING AND FINANCES TO PERPETUATE THE ACR AS AN EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT AND ECONOMICALLY SELF-SUSTAINING ENTITY.

Objective 1: Ranch governance will be reviewed at the completion of this Strategic Plan and at a minimum, every three years during the life of the Plan.

Strategies:

1. Review the structure and membership of the Management and Technical Committees every three years.
2. Develop and implement a strategy/plan for the long term management of the lease and its renewal by January 1, 2009.

Objective 2: Ranch staff will be recognized for the major role they play in the Ranch meeting its objectives.

Strategies:

1. Staff compensation will be competitive.
2. Staff will attend workshops, conferences, etc. as necessary to maintain their expertise.

Objective 3: The Ranch will be economically self-sufficient by 2020.

Strategies:

1. Develop and implement a long range financial plan to 2020. This plan will address the Ranch's economic self-sufficiency and be completed by January 1, 2009.
2. Develop an annual operating budget/plan by April 1 which will include a projection of major future capital or maintenance costs.

