



## A NOTE OF APPRECIATION FOR HARVEY BUCKLEY

It is not an exaggeration to say that Harvey Buckley has been the heart and soul of Action for Agriculture, as well as one of the primary spokespeople for all things “working land”-related for the last several decades. Harvey was founding director eighteen years ago, constant researcher and communicator, as well as past president of Action for Agriculture for the last six years. Having completed his last two term mandate, Harvey was convinced to stand for election as a municipal councilor for the M.D. of Rocky View at this time of unprecedented growth. It should be noted that through his contributions to Land Use Planning, from the provincial level, as a committee member for the Province of Alberta Land Use Framework, a regional level in the Calgary Regional Framework, and now at a municipal level, through the M.D. of Rocky View, Harvey has also been a positive and

constructive force for progressive planning and conservation measures for working agricultural lands. Harvey has always “thought big” and guided many legislators, ranchers and farmers, and people interested in the future well- being of our province’s rich working lands, through workshops and writings, involving some of the best land-use idea makers in North America.

Harvey Buckley is a very difficult, if not impossible act to follow. However, members of Action for Agriculture, since inception, will shoulder our share of the workload to keep the legacy intact and continuing to grow. The present board knows that, while there is no replacement for Harvey, we will work as a team to ensure progress in furthering the preservation of working lands in Alberta. Senior board members, including Verne Kemble, Bob Anderson and Peter Hughes will

provide continuity and leadership. Kim Good and Liz Breakey will function as co-chairs, with Sharon Bright as secretary and Trish Putnam as membership chair, together with incoming director, John McMurray. The immediate goal will be to establish goals and priorities, both for the immediate future and for the next five years. Action for Agriculture plans to continue as an active participant at the provincial, regional and municipal level for land use planning. One of our projected goals will be to work towards an Alberta Farmland Trust, based on free market principles of working lands conservation. We have joined the Environmental Stewardship Project with Alberta Agriculture and Food Council and will continue to work with the Bow River and Elbow River Watershed Management Partnerships.

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**THE FUTURE FOR WORKING LANDS OF ALBERTA WITHIN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY:  
SOME THOUGHTS FROM HARVEY BUCKLEY**

Action for Agriculture's quest to conserve the land for future generations appears to be more important today than ever. In the last twelve months, the Global Economic Outlook has shifted dramatically. An article in a recent publication of the National Post asks the question: "Have you been to Shanghai, China lately? It looks like the next New York with the next Wall Street! You get the feeling you are in the middle of the beating heart of a new global power. The rules of the world economy are being rewritten but not by the West. The world in which Canada, the United States and Europe were dominant with their corporations, their currencies and their rules and regulations, is over and a New World Order is being created".

As the Far East has taken control of low-wage labour market, this was only a first step in an escalating process. The stages the global economy is now undergoing is steady encroachment on the middle class and high tech jobs as Asian nations invest more and more of their revenues in research and education. As Asia booms, Europe, the U.S. and Canada will face increasing unemployment, national

debt and balance of trade deficits. Who will be the winners and losers of globalization will depend on how we respond to preserve the prosperity we have today. These are some of the questions and scenarios discussed in financial articles; they are downright scary!

In the June/July issue of Country Guide magazine, there is a feature article: "Beijing, Saskatchewan-the new superpower of food consumption" – and there is only one such global superpower – China. Less than 10% of China's land base is productive farmland and with the recent mass exodus in China from rural to urban centres, China has lost over 50 million acres to development of its urban centres. By comparison, Alberta has only 51 million acres in total, or 30% of Canada's total food producing land. China is looking at building elevator capacity in Western Canada to secure grains, oilseeds and pulses for future food supplies! This is certainly long term thinking on China's part but also what we can expect from the Far East countries in general, as their populations and middle class expands. China is moving forward on this initiative

through their International Science and Technology Development Centre offices in Beijing and Regina. You can learn more about I.S.T.D.C. at [www.istdc.com](http://www.istdc.com).

NO FARMS-NO FOOD is the message on the bumper sticker created by the American Farmland Trust. This message is even more important today. Action for Agriculture has been involved in the draft policies for the Provincial Land Use Framework. We feel these policies are certainly heading in the right direction but we urge our members and the public to be involved at this critical time in working to conserve land – not only for today but also for the future so new generations of Albertans can compete in the New World Globalized Community.

The key message of the Province of Alberta's Land Use Framework is as follows: The people of Alberta will work together to respect and care for the land as the foundation of our economic, environmental, social and cultural well being. There are six foundation strategies developed to achieve this vision. The Working Group for Growth and Resource Management, in which Action for Agriculture was a

participant, has proposed a seventh strategy: Efficient Land Use Strategy as an essential requirement in order to ensure that the Vision and Outcomes proposed with the Land Use Framework are realized.

If the entire world had an ecological footprint as large as that of the average Albertan, five planets would be required to meet consumption demands. The Alberta Ecological Footprint is 37% larger than the average Canadian footprint, in part due to the expanse of land and historical traditions. The need for a Land Use Efficiency Strategy

is obvious; we must plan for the future by reducing our uses of resources and land in an efficient manner.

The Calgary Regional Partnership is also moving forward with strategies and policy proposals towards a Regional Plan for Land Use and Services. We find most of the strategies being developed seem to be in concert and aligned with the Provincial Land Use Framework. The target date for completion of the C.R.P. is June, 2009. The Provincial L.U.F. will be implementing the Regional Plans for Edmonton, Calgary, Fort McMurray and

the Eastern Slopes first; all regional plans will be finalized and adopted between 2010 to 2012.

Certainly, if we are going to compete globally and enjoy the level of prosperity that we have today in the future, these planning frameworks are a “must”. For further information, visit the following website and keep up to date and involved: Calgary Regional Partnership:  
[www.calgaryregion.ca](http://www.calgaryregion.ca)  
Provincial Land Use Framework:  
[www.landuse.gov.ab.ca](http://www.landuse.gov.ab.ca)

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**‘BEAUTY OF LANDSCAPES HAS VALUE’: GLORIA FLORA, KEYNOTE  
SPEAKER AT ACTION FOR AGRICULTURE WINTER WORKSHOP,  
MARCH 2008  
( Enrique Massot, reprinted with permission from Rocky View Weekly)**

Breathtaking views, such as the Rocky Mountains as a background to a Springbank landscape of ranches, farms and acreages, should be taken into account when making land use decisions, a public lands specialist stated at a recent workshop held by Action for Agriculture, a land conservation advocacy group, on Regional Land Use Planning this past March.

“ That is totally essential to the human spirit”, said Gloria Flora, the Montana-based director of a non-profit organization promoting sustainability and land stewardship. However, Flora said, those in charge do not consider a view as relevant in land use decisions. People say “let’s just do the economics”, she explained.

Ms. Flora spoke at a land use workshop hosted by

Action for agriculture, a land conservation advocacy group. After a 22-year career as a forest supervisor with the United States Forest Service, Flora founded Sustainable, Obtainable Solutions (SOS) to work on sustainable land and energy management. At the Airdrie workshop, Flora discussed the Blackfoot Challenge, a grassroots organization, established in 1990 that has

worked on alleviating the mining, logging and over grazing issues within the Blackfoot River Valley of Montana. Today, the Valley faces another threat – fragmentation of the land base for residential uses, construction of golf courses and other commercial projects.

Through a collaborative process, the challenge successfully restored wetlands and streams, and placed nearly 45,000 acres of land under conservation easements, thereby improving water quality in the Blackfoot River.

After her presentation, Flora said that her experience as a public land manager showed her that only things that could be measured were considered in land use decisions. “When we (planning bodies) want comments on a development project, we tell people to

effects of oil well drilling, bring comments that have to either physical or biological”, she said. Such as “How much water will you lose, or how many wild animals will be put in distress”.

On the other hand, she stated, “What is more important to humans is the qualities (of the land)”. Flora scoffed at the notion that planners will not consider views as something that should influence land-use decisions. “The view does count” she emphasized, as “View adds huge economic value to real estate”.

Flora, who is a landscape architect by training, said scientific research has demonstrated that consumers will pay for “beauty”, for “quality”, for sustainability for the future.

In spite of that, Flora said that planners would tell those with the desire to preserve the integrity of an

area for the sake of its natural beauty that that argument could not be taken into consideration. Society and governments have not yet put into place a system which would identify the subjective value of a forested hillside, a pristine meandering river, or an undisturbed tract of native fescue grassland.

Flora said that the simple message for all those with a stake in the land is “Trust your guts”. If it does not feel good, then is probably isn’t”.

A good example of a society that has place value on irreplaceable landscapes is the United Kingdom which has created “Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AOBNC), identified as such because they are so beautiful that it is in the nation’s interest to preserve them for future generations.

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## **BLACKFOOT CHALLENGE AS POTENTIAL “TWIN” WITH EASTERN SLOPES COALITION**

As a follow-up to conversations with landowners and members of both Action for Agriculture and the Priddis Ratepayers Association, several members journeyed down to Montana to meet with ecologist, Gloria Flora and various partners within the Blackfoot Challenge. The goals were to learn from their experiences and to establish lines of communication for collaboration on trans-border land use management, for the future. We all face the same issues from pressures of development, including the cumulative effects of mining and oil exploration, logging and potential contamination of our watersheds through various forms of development. There is hope for the future when citizens and legislators talk with each other. For more information on the Blackfoot Challenge see their website at [www.blackfootchallenge.org](http://www.blackfootchallenge.org)

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**ENDORSEMENT OF PROVINCIAL LAND USE  
FRAMEWORK OF ALBERTA**  
*(letter sent to Premier Stelmach and SRD Minister Morton)*

The Board of Directors of Action for Agriculture, on behalf of our membership of working ranch and farm landowners, legislative members and agriculturally-involved parties, would like to commend and applaud the significant initiatives contained within the proposed Provincial Land Use Framework. We feel very strongly that we were listened to and heard and that these policies, when enacted in legislation, will go a long way to preserving working lands and open spaces within our province.

Above all, we support the initiative towards a strong Regional Land-Use Planning structure, based on scientific management of our watersheds, the powerful tools of “Cumulative Effects Management”, and proposed strategies for Land Conservation and Stewardship on Public and Private Lands. Action for Agriculture has long supported the “Conservation Toolbox” of the new policy instruments proposed within the Provincial LUF. We feel strongly that this legislation offers the optimum, market-based means to promote the preservation of working lands and the continued production of high quality food products, together with protection of watersheds within the Province. We offer our support in any way possible towards these policy initiatives and hope very much for the creation of an “Albertan Land Trust” to oversee the continuance of these objectives.

We thank you and Dr. Morton, for your clear statement of goals and policies for sustaining the best of working lands and landscapes within the Province of Alberta.

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**HIGHLIGHTS OF AGRICULTURE-RELATED POLICY PROPOSALS IN THE  
CALGARY REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP (CRP) LAND USE DRAFT PLAN**

CRP Draft Policy #1.4 – Work proactively with the Province to refine, integrate and implement Provincial policies embodied in the Province’s Land Use Framework:

5. “Support for higher density, infill development across the region, which preserves the natural environment, preserves agricultural land and makes more efficient use of existing infrastructure”
  - 3.14 Reduce the fragmentation and conversion of better agricultural lands
  - 3.16 New urban development should avoid important natural features and Ecological infrastructure
  - 4.1 Encourage the intensification of all presently developed lands (urban, country residential and industrial) throughout the region with the aim that as much as 20-25% of the region’s long-term growth might be accommodated through appropriate forms of intensification on existing developed lands

## Update on Transfer of Development Credits (TDC) in Alberta Kim Good, Miistakis Institute

TDCs are a tool that allows communities to direct intensive development away from areas where they feel it is inappropriate to areas where it seems most sensible. It goes beyond traditional zoning by providing a framework for long-term community planning, and doing so based on an open-market mechanism.

Briefly stated, the program identifies areas where increased development is desirable, and areas where it is less appropriate, then assigns 'development credits' to each parcel within the program area. Those in the 'development' area are required to purchase credits from parcels in the 'conservation' area before being allowed to increase the density of their development beyond their own single credit.

There has been growing interest and discussion about Transfer of Development Credit programming in Alberta. Red Deer County and Miistakis Institute have been considering how TDCs may help Red Deer County achieve their conservation and development goals. Beaverhills Initiative and

Alberta Research Council have conducted a feasibility study of market-based incentives including TDCs (<http://www.ducks.ca/province/ab/partners/beaver/tdc/index.html>). MD of Bighorn has changed their land use bylaw and MDP to allow for certain components of a TDC program to be used. As well Transfer of Development Credits were identified and described in the draft Alberta Land Use Framework as a stewardship tool for private land conservation.

August 13 and 14, 2008 Red Deer County and the Miistakis Institute co-hosted a Transfer of Development Credits (TDC) Information Session and Workshop. Proving the interest in TDCs is growing, the response to invitations was fantastic with over 80 people registering. Representatives from 12 municipalities (including both elected officials and staff), four land trusts, four provincial agencies and two planning companies attended.

The information session began with a TDC basics presentation by Guy Greenaway of the Miistakis Institute which was followed by a presentation about the

legality of TDCs in Alberta by Arlene Kwasniak from the University of Calgary, Faculty of Law and Faculty of Environmental Design. Russell Legge from Larimer County, Colorado; Peter Fogg from Boulder County, Colorado and Jenny Plummer-Welker from Calvert County, Maryland described their TDC programs and then participated in a panel discussion where the audience was invited to ask questions. The information session wrapped up with three presentations from municipalities in Alberta who are investigating TDCs or implementing some components of a TDC program.

The workshop began the next morning. Participants were divided into eight breakout groups and asked to discuss and present on a variety of questions related to Sending Areas, Receiving Areas and Credit Systems. The results of the workshop will be available on the new TDC program page on the Miistakis Institute website shortly ([www.rockies.ca/programs/tdcs.htm](http://www.rockies.ca/programs/tdcs.htm)).

# IN CONSIDERATION OF AN ALBERTA FARMLAND TRUST

## *By Kim Good and Liz Breakey*

Understanding the value that well-managed farmland has to society and the environment has prompted people in other areas to formally protect agricultural land for food production. Two such organizations are the American Farmland Trust and the Ontario Farmland Trust. The following are excerpts from their websites.

### THE AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST ([www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org))

Founded in 1980 by a group of farmers and conservationists concerned about the rapid loss of the nation's farmland to development, American Farmland Trust (AFT) is a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to protecting our nation's strategic agricultural resources.

Working with farmers and ranchers, political leaders and community activists, AFT has helped to permanently protect more than a million acres of America's best farm and ranch land.

AFT has four key strategies for saving the land that sustains us:

- **Transform U.S. farm policy** to strengthen the future of American agriculture;
- **Protect the best land** by supporting effective state and local farmland protection initiatives;
- **Plan for agriculture** to keep farming viable and help communities balance growth while protecting working land;
- **Keep the land healthy** and productive by encouraging stewardship practices that safeguard our nation's natural resources.

Some of the ideas promoted by AFT include:

1. Tax Savings for Landowners Who Save the Land

More than half of the U.S. is privately owned and much of that is farmed, so tax incentives for land protection could significantly boost efforts to save farms across the country. The "2008 Farm Bill" extends substantial tax incentives for qualified farmers and ranchers who donate conservation easements. Qualified landowners can deduct the value of donated easements up to 100 percent of their adjusted gross income and carry the unused forward.

2. A Consequential Conservation Program

The "Conservation Reserve Program" protects environmentally fragile agricultural land by rewarding farmers with payments for removing the land from production and restoring it to grassland or other cover. The program, considered to be the nation's largest and most successful conservation effort aimed at the stewardship of sensitive lands, was recently under pressure to allow potentially millions of acres back into production – due to rising crop prices, floods and drought. In a commendable decision made by USDA Secretary Schafer, requests for early release of land from the program were declined unless previous payments received for protecting the environmentally fragile acres were paid back.

3. Take the Keep It Local Pledge

If you aren't enjoying all the freshest foods the summer has to offer, what are you waiting for? Farm fresh products are filling farmers markets and farm stands, and even restaurants and grocery stores are offering local options to meet growing demand from the growing Local Foods Movement. But the farms and ranches that supply local markets are also some of the most threatened by development in the nation. Support your nearby farmers and ranchers by taking American Farmland Trust's "Keep It Local Pledge".

## THE ONTARIO FARMLAND TRUST ([www.ontariofarmlandtrust.org](http://www.ontariofarmlandtrust.org))

The idea for the Ontario Farmland Trust (OFT) began to emerge at a workshop on farmland preservation held in 2002 at the Mountsberg Conservation Area. Here, both farm and conservation groups came together to examine the farmland preservation issue and to ask whether a land trust dedicated to protecting farmland would be a positive step forward for Ontario. The workshop attracted far more participants than expected, and there emerged a strong agreement that both further research to document patterns of farmland loss and the establishment of a land trust to focus public attention were desirable steps to take.

The group that helped to establish the trust recognized in the beginning that it would be necessary to focus activities on issues related to farmland, farming, and farmers. It is not enough to preserve farmland if the farming community who farms that land is not equally supported.

Over the past two years the OFT has attained incorporated charitable status, and diverged from the university-based research program where it originated to become an independent

organization. We have focused on building the organization, building good working relationships with major farm organizations, establishing a Board of Directors, and working to implement the practices necessary to conform to the new Canadian Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices. We have appeared at numerous farm meetings, key annual meetings and farm shows, and have hosted two major farmland preservation conferences. In 2007, we published [\*Farmland Preservation: Land for Future Generations\*](#), an important book for the conservation community, based on these events. We have also had significant input to government policy, and now are sought out for advice by a number of agencies.

The OFT handles numerous requests from private landowners interested in agricultural easements or donations, and meetings with both municipal and provincial government agencies are ongoing, always directed at strengthening efforts to protect farmland in southern Ontario.

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## STATEMENT OF GOALS FROM THE NEW BOARD

“Our goal is to ensure that Alberta’s rich land resources are taken care of by working with all individuals and organizations who share our concern about the rapid disappearance of agricultural and undeveloped land. Farming is not an occupation for the timid and we must all recognize that “the soil begets much of creation and all of civilization”. The plan for the upcoming year will be to focus on a selected few objectives, such as working towards an “Alberta Farmland Trust”, in order to maximize our resources. The board welcomes and needs input from all the membership, in order to refine our goals and ensure progress for Action for Agriculture membership.

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