

# Natural Resources Conservation Board

## Business Plan 2013-2016

The Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) is an independent, quasi-judicial and regulatory agency of the Government of Alberta. It is accountable to the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development and is responsible for reviews of natural resource projects under the *Natural Resources Conservation Board Act*, and regulating Alberta’s confined feeding industry under the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act*.

The *Natural Resources Conservation Board Act* is the responsibility of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development.

The *Agricultural Operation Practices Act* is the responsibility of Agriculture and Rural Development. A 2006 memorandum of understanding between the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, and the Chair and Chief Executive Officer of the Natural Resources Conservation Board describes the purpose of the act, and governance and mandate responsibilities.

<i>Vision</i>	To be a respected decision-maker, exemplifying integrity and foresight in the best interests of Alberta.
<i>Mission</i>	As a quasi-judicial agency, the NRCB makes impartial and knowledge-based decisions across two distinct mandates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the <i>Natural Resources Conservation Board Act</i>, the NRCB decides if natural resource projects are in the public interest, considering social, environmental and economic effects, and</li> <li>• Under the <i>Agricultural Operation Practices Act</i>, the NRCB fulfills application and compliance responsibilities, administers and advances policies, and conducts board reviews for confined feeding operations</li> </ul>
<i>Values</i>	In achieving our mission, we honour the NRCB’s core values of integrity, fairness, respect, excellence and service.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Natural Resources Conservation Board has identified the following strategic priorities for 2013-16:

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| <p><b>1. Cross government initiatives</b><br/>Linkage: goals one and two</p>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support priority Government of Alberta initiatives such as Water for Life, the Clean Air Strategy and the Land-use Framework.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>2. Consistent delivery of the <i>Agricultural Operation Practices Act</i></b><br/>Linkage: goal two</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with government ministries and stakeholders on the development of operational policy and technical guidelines to ensure consistent delivery of the <i>Agricultural Operation Practices Act</i>.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>3. Risk based approach to assist in regulating confined feeding operations</b><br/>Linkage: goal two</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to use an environmental risk based approach for compliance activities at confined feeding operations and to review permit applications for new or expanding operations. The NRCB will also increase its emphasis on documenting surface water issues associated with confined feeding operations.</li> </ul> |

**4. Enhance confined feeding operation information and access**  
**Linkage: goal two**

- Verify information and improve internal documentation in the NRCB's confined feeding operation database and implement and maintain an enhanced public website to facilitate public access to information.

**CORE BUSINESSES: GOALS, STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

**Core Business One: Board reviews and appeals under the *Natural Resources Conservation Board Act* and the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act*.**

**Goal one**

Natural Resources Conservation Board reviews and hearings result in balanced decisions and are conducted in a manner that is effective, fair, transparent and timely.

**What it means**

The Board conducts reviews of proposed natural resource projects under the *Natural Resources Conservation Board Act* to determine whether the projects are in the public interest, having regard for their environmental, social and economic impact. Reviews are mandatory for non-energy mining, forestry, water management or recreation projects for which an environmental impact assessment is required under the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*. Projects may also be referred to the board by Order in Council.

Under the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act*, the Board must determine whether to grant a request for a review of a permitting or compliance decision. Should the Board grant a review, it may be oral, electronic or written. The Board may also recommend mediation.

- Strategies**
- 1.a Update the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act*, Board Administrative Procedures Regulation in consultation with NRCB staff and stakeholders.
  - 1.b Proactively provide opportunities for all participants to understand NRCB review and hearing processes through guides, public information sessions, and prompt, accurate responses to direct inquiries.
  - 1.c Identify critical scientific and technical issues raised in applications under the *Natural Resources Conservation Board Act* to determine relevant information needed to ensure that reviews are effective, fair, transparent and timely.
  - 1.d Ensure that natural resource projects and confined feeding operation permit application reviews are consistent with regional land use plans.

**Performance measures**

Efficiency of review process	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Percentage of Natural Resources Conservation Board's decisions issued within 80 working days of the conclusion of reviews under the <i>Natural Resources Conservation Board Act</i> and within 30 working days of the conclusion of hearings under the <i>Agricultural Operation Practices Act</i>	100%	100%	100%

**Core Business Two: Regulation under the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act***

**Goal two**

Effective and efficient approval and compliance processes for confined feeding operations and manure management.

**What it means**

The Natural Resources Conservation Board regulates confined feeding operations in Alberta under the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act*. It consults with the multi-stakeholder Policy Advisory Group on priority issues and operational policy development, and addresses consistency with regional land use plans.

The board ensures that new and existing confined feeding operations meet the legislated requirements of the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act*, delivers a risk based compliance program, ensures that existing operations are compliant with the act and their permits, and investigates and responds to complaints.

- Strategies**
- 2.a Continue to use an environmental risk based approach for responding to water quality issues associated with confined feeding operations.
  - 2.b Enhance direct communication with confined feeding operators and key stakeholders on priority NRCB initiatives, policies and programs that directly affect them.
  - 2.c Continue to develop new and update existing operational policies in consultation with the Policy Advisory Group to support consistent delivery of the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act*.
  - 2.d Continue to improve the confined feeding operation database by enhancing the software, verifying the data and expanding the documentation of compliance activities.
  - 2.e Continue to support other departments and agencies studying the effects of manure collection and storage facilities on water quality.

### Performance measures

Efficiency of permitting process	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Percentage of decisions issued within 65 working days from the date the application is determined to be complete	85%	85%	85%
Complaint resolution	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Percentage of complaint files resolved or requiring no further action within 90 days	95%	95%	95%

### Organizational capacity

#### Goal three

The Natural Resources Conservation Board has the expertise and technical resources required to fulfill its mandates under the *Natural Resources Conservation Board Act*, and the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act*.

#### What it means

Staff and Board members of the Natural Resources Conservation Board work with diverse issues requiring detailed technical knowledge. Staff and Board members are highly trained, competent and motivated to deliver high standards of service.

The Natural Resources Conservation Board is committed to effective internal communications to build teamwork and a shared understanding throughout the organization of its values and mandate.

- Strategies**
- 3.a Continue to provide appropriate funding and opportunities for staff education and training in areas of required knowledge.
  - 3.b Maintain and continuously improve internal information technology tools to support more efficient sharing of information among staff, including populating and expanding use of the technical document repository, creation of a bank of NRCB-owned images, and expanded video-conferencing capabilities.
  - 3.c Initiate a review of the NRCB's central filing, retrieval and information retention systems.
  - 3.d Enhance opportunities for face-to-face communication between managers, staff and divisions.
  - 3.e Maintain the NRCB's capacity to provide technical expertise through a variety of means, including using contracted experts to provide support as required.

### Performance measures

NRCB employee satisfaction	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Per cent of staff who express satisfaction on survey results	75%	75 %	75 %
NRCB employees have appropriate training	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Per cent of staff who participate in training programs	90%	90%	90%

## BUDGET INFORMATION

The 2013-16 budget is based on the strategic priorities and strategies identified in the business plan.

### EXPENSE BY CORE BUSINESS

	Comparable			2013-14 Estimate	2014-15 Target	2015-16 Target
	2011-12 Actual	2012-13 Budget	2012-13 Forecast			
<b>AOPA and NRCBA Mandates</b>						
Board: Reviews under NRCBA and AOPA	\$1,214,461	\$1,327,658	\$1,327,658	\$1,345,162	\$1,345,162	\$1,345,162
Operations: Regulation under AOPA and support for the NRCBA applications	5,130,200	5,121,342	5,121,342	5,132,839	5,132,839	5,132,839
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$6,344,661<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>\$6,449,000</b>	<b>\$6,449,000</b>	<b>\$6,478,000</b>	<b>\$6,478,000</b>	<b>\$6,478,000</b>

### STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

	Comparable			2013-14 Estimate	2014-15 Target	2015-16 Target
	2011-12 Actual	2012-13 Budget	2012-13 Forecast			
<b>Revenues</b>						
Transfer from ESRD	\$5,922,000	\$6,405,000	\$6,405,000	\$6,434,000	\$6,434,000	\$6,434,000
Miscellaneous Investment & other revenue	52,798	31,000	37,000	37,000	37,000	37,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$5,974,798</b>	<b>\$6,436,000</b>	<b>\$6,442,000</b>	<b>\$6,471,000</b>	<b>\$6,471,000</b>	<b>\$6,471,000</b>
<b>Expenses</b>						
Personnel	4,850,282	5,360,130	5,360,130	5,358,800	5,358,800	5,358,800
Supplies and Services	1,003,723	1,058,870	1,055,870	1,089,200	1,089,200	1,089,200
Amortization	34,517	30,000	33,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$5,888,522</b>	<b>\$6,449,000</b>	<b>\$6,449,000</b>	<b>\$6,478,000</b>	<b>\$6,478,000</b>	<b>\$6,478,000</b>
<b>Net Operating Results</b>	<b>\$86,276</b>	<b>(\$13,000)</b>	<b>(\$7,000)</b>	<b>(\$7,000)</b>	<b>(\$7,000)</b>	<b>(\$7,000)</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes \$456,139 leased cost for office space paid by Alberta Infrastructure. This amount is not included in the Statement of Operations.