



# Policy #6310

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**Policy Title:** Vegetation Management

**Policy No.:** 6310

**Approval:** Council

**Effective Date:** April 26, 2017

**Approved Date:** April 26, 2017

**Review Date:** September 10, 2018

**Supersedes Policy No.:** New - Replacing repealed Bylaw No. 15/78 Control of Weeds on County Road Allowances

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**Policy Statement:** Mountain View County (the County) will direct vegetation management on County road allowances.

**Purpose:** The control of vegetation in County right of ways is vital for the economic prosperity and safety of the public. Vegetation growth in the road allowance can cause many problems including spreading of prohibited noxious and noxious weeds into agricultural and environmentally significant lands, reduced visibility of traffic, signs, vehicles and wildlife. Additionally vegetation can cause excess snow drifting, reduced drainage, and negatively impact the integrity of the road infrastructure.

**Principles:**

1. The County reserves the right to maintain any public roadway as deemed appropriate by the County.
2. The County will utilize Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies to best limit any negative environmental, wildlife, and public impacts. Strategies such as certified seed usage, mowing, selective herbicide spraying and no spray areas will be utilized.
3. This Policy does not apply to Provincially Controlled highways, private roads, private contractors, or roads not under the jurisdiction of the County, e.g. Power lines and utility right of ways.



Procedure Title: **Vegetation Management**

Procedure No.: **6310-01**

Approval: **CAO**

Effective Date: **April 26, 2017**

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Reviewed Date: **September 10, 2018**

Supersedes Procedure No.: **New - Replacing repealed Bylaw No. 15/78 Control of Weeds on County Road Allowances**

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## 1. Definitions

- 1.1 **“Apiculture”** will be defined as the maintenance of honey bee colonies, commonly in hives, by humans.
- 1.2 **“Control”** will be defined as to encompass either destroy or inhibit the growth or spread of Weeds.
- 1.3 **“County”** will be defined as Mountain View County
- 1.4 **“Control Area”** will be defined as the area in which vegetation Control operations shall be performed.
- 1.5 **“Ditch/Roadside”** will be defined as the area between the Road edge and fence line.
- 1.6 **“Fieldman”** will be defined as Mountain View County’s Agricultural Fieldman or a designate appointed by the Agricultural Fieldman.
- 1.7 **“Noxious Weeds”** will be defined as a plant designated in accordance with the regulations by the Alberta Weed Control Act as a Noxious Weeds and includes the plant’s seeds. As per the Alberta Weed Control Act all Noxious Weeds must be Controlled to inhibit the growth or spread by the land owner or designate.
- 1.8 **“Nuisance Weeds”** will be defined as undesirable Weeds not regulated by the Alberta Weed Control Act but of concern for the County.
- 1.9 **“Open Water Body”** will be defined as rivers, streams, lakes, public irrigation ditches, and ponds/sloughs greater than 4 hectares (10 acres). Open bodies of water shall **not** include:
  - roadside ditches, sloughs or ponds less than 4 hectares (10 acres)
  - 0.4 hectares on public land providing they are completely surrounded by private land with no drainage off the land
  - dry streams in a forest management area having a bed and shore averaging 0.5 meters or less in width within the boundaries of the treatment area
- 1.10 **“Pedestrian”** will be defined as a person walking along a Road or in a developed area including general public that are in the vicinity of County operations.
- 1.11 **“Pesticide”** will be defined as to encompass herbicide, fungicide, insecticide and rodenticide.
- 1.12 **“Pesticide Control”** will be defined as registered Pesticide application as per label and manufacture recommendations by a trained applicator.

- 1.13 **“Prohibited Noxious Weeds”** will be defined as a plant designated in accordance with the regulations by the Alberta Weed Control Act as a Prohibited Noxious Weeds and includes the plant’s seeds. As per the Alberta Weed Control Act all Prohibited Noxious Weeds must be killed including all growing plant parts or to render reproductive mechanisms non-viable by the land owner or designate.
- 1.14 **“Regulated Weeds”** will be defined as all Weeds under the Alberta Weed Control Act, including both Prohibited Noxious and Noxious Weeds.
- 1.15 **“Rinsate”** will be defined as Pesticides diluted with water resulting from the cleaning process of spray equipment and containers.
- 1.16 **“Roads”** will be defined as the Collector Network under the responsibility of Mountain View County.
- 1.17 **“Safety Data Sheet (SDS)”** also known as Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) will be defined as documents supplied by the product manufacture that provide information about the hazards of a product and advice about safety precautions.
- 1.18 **“Work Area”** will be defined as the area determined by the Fieldman or designate in which Weed Control actives will be performed.
- 1.19 **“Weed(s)”** will be defined as undesirable plant(s) competing with desirable plants or vegetation.

## **2. Herbicide Control Procedures**

- 2.1 Mountain View County Collector Network shall be sprayed with registered herbicides to Control Prohibited Noxious and Noxious Weeds as per the Alberta Weed Control Act. Spraying operations shall be carried throughout the entire County, however, the main focus shall be on a three year rotation with a third of the County focused upon each year.
- 2.2 Should Nuisance Weeds pose a concern a Control plan shall be developed by the Fieldman.
- 2.3 Mountain View County shall advertise in the County newspaper in advance of the spraying season when the roadside Pesticide Control programs is to commence.
- 2.4 Signage of Pesticide application in public areas, such as parks, sidewalks and office buildings, shall be posted 72 hours in advance of the application.
- 2.5 Herbicide Control, mowing, and other Integrated Pest Management strategies shall be utilized as a means to Control Regulated and Nuisance Weeds.
- 2.6 Herbicide Control shall occur annually, consistent with the standards and good practices as set out under the Professional Vegetation Managers Association of Alberta (PVMA) Standards and Good Practices, the Environmental Code of Practice for Pesticides, and in accordance with applicable Federal and Provincial legislation.
- 2.7 All pesticides and procedures used will meet Health Canada standards and County employees will be trained and certified in accordance to Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act.
- 2.8 Mountain View County shall employ at minimum one certified pesticide applicator. All spray operations staff will be at a minimum trained and certified as an authorized assistant applicator licencing.

- 2.9 Application records shall be kept in accordance with Federal and Provincial legislation. Record keeping shall be the responsibility of the applicator at the time of application. Application forms shall be filled out completely.
- 2.10 Pesticide application shall follow label and manufacture directions. All staff involved in spraying operations shall have access to and carry labels and SDS sheets when spray operations are underway. Copies of the label and SDS sheets shall be made available as requested.
- 2.11 Pesticide Control activities shall be conducted only when environmental conditions are favorable and meet all label recommendations. Spraying activities shall cease at temperatures above 30 degrees Celsius, wind speeds in excessive of 20 km/hr, and/or spray drift is visible.
- 2.12 Pesticide selection shall entail Best Management Practices and Integrated Pest Management strategies to limit negative environmental and wildlife impact, and optimize effectiveness, and longevity of the product. Product rotation shall be utilized to avoid resistance and escape issues. Where possible a selective herbicide shall be used to minimize negative environmental and wildlife impact.
- 2.13 Trials may be carried out on an ongoing basis as time permits to compare alternative vegetation Control methods. Innovative methods shall be researched and compared for effectiveness, cost and their safety to the environment. All trials shall be coordinated through the Fieldman.
- 2.14 Herbicide Control shall not take place within 30 meters of Open Water Bodies or other sensitive locations.
- 2.15 Herbicide Control shall not take place within 30 meters of the access to a residence/farmstead, shelterbelts along laneways, gardens, and dwellings. Weeds within these 30 meters shall be the responsibility of the landowner.
- 2.16 Herbicide Control shall not take place within 3 meters of public and private mailboxes. If Weed management is required around mailboxes a plan shall be put in place by the Fieldman.
- 2.17 Efforts shall be made to avoid sensitive areas such as shelterbelts, sensitive crops, beehives, and native flowers. Areas with native vegetation and no Regulated or Nuisance Weeds shall be avoided.
- 2.18 Label and manufacture recommendations shall be followed when spraying along sensitive crops and trees.
- 2.19 Weeds shall be Controlled at the request of Operational Services after approval by the Fieldman for Road safety and maintenance concerns.
- 2.20 Blanket spray operations of the entire ditch shall be avoided in an attempt to mitigate negative environmental and wildlife impact.
- 2.21 Efforts shall be made to minimize the impact on the communities where Weed Control activities shall take place.
- 2.22 Weed Control requests from the public will be taken and as approved by the Fieldman shall be added to the schedule based on priority.
- 2.23 Weed Control on private property or Undeveloped Road Allowances shall only be done if it benefits the County and approved by the Fieldman. A right of entry agreement shall be completed prior to entry onto private land.

- 2.24 No compensation shall be given to landowners for damages incurred in the Work Area between the fence lines that appear to mark the edges of the Road allowance due to the Vegetation Control Program.
- 2.25 Mixing of Herbicides and loading of spray equipment shall be in accordance with label directions and regulations and when possible will be performed in the Agricultural Services Shop.
- 2.26 Spray equipment will be stored and/or parked in accordance of label directions and regulations. When possible spray equipment will be stored in the Agricultural Services Shop.
- 2.27 All Pesticide containers shall be triple rinsed and disposed of as per label, Provincial and Federal recommendations.
- 2.28 Rinsate shall be added to an appropriate spray solution as per label directions. If an appropriate spray solution is not available the rinsate will be disposed of in accordance with label and regulations recommendations.
- 2.29 All safety equipment required as per the label and SDS sheets shall be provided by Mountain View County and shall be the responsibility of the staff to wear.
- 2.30 Water required for the spraying operations shall be sourced from controlled sources, such as town water supplies, and shall not negatively impact the public. Water tanks shall be filled in such a manner that environmental and public safety shall not be threatened.
- 2.31 Equipment selection for each project will be selected with the employee, public and environmental health and safety in mind.
- 2.32 Spraying equipment shall be equipped with visibility warning devices in an attempt to be visible on the Roadways and Work Areas.
- 2.33 Operators shall conduct operations keeping traffic safety in mind at all times. Operations shall only be conducted during daylight hours and at times of good visibility.
- 2.34 If spray crews have any questions or concerns on the work to be completed operations will cease at the location until clarity can be achieved.
- 2.35 The Fieldman will perform audits as set out by Federal and Provincial legislation.

### **3. No Spray Request**

- 3.1 Mountain View County understands the different sensitivities that landowners have toward Pesticides and offers landowners the ability to ask for no herbicides to be applied in the Control Area adjacent their property through a No Spray Request.
- 3.2 Organic farms, beekeepers, and residents with sensitive plantings are encouraged to enter into a No Spray Request.
- 3.3 Landowners wanting a No Spray Request shall contact the Fieldman. Upon filling out the Request the landowner shall agree to Control any Weed concerns in the Control Area along the whole property stated in the No Spray Request to the satisfaction of the Fieldman. Partial areas along the landowner's property shall not be considered for the Request.

- 3.4 The No Spray Request must be renewed every five (5) years. The County may terminate the No Spray Request indefinitely if the landowner does not meet the terms and conditions of the Request.
- 3.5 No Spray Requests are to be filled out before May 1<sup>st</sup>, any Requests after May 1 of each year will be processed but not necessarily added to the No Spray list before vegetation Control activities commence.
- 3.6 It will be the landowner's responsibility to fill out the No Spray Request. A newspaper ad will be posted in the local papers prior herbicide Control activities in an attempt to notify residents of spray activity and as a reminder to fill out the No Spray Request.
- 3.7 The No Spray Request will only be valid for the Control of Weeds and brush with Pesticides and does not include any mechanical Controls. Mechanical brushing and mowing operations will still take place in the areas stated in the No Spray Request.
- 3.8 Upon the No Spray Request being processed and the landowner's Control measures are adequate in the Control Area, County staff shall make every effort to adhere to the Request.
- 3.9 The No Spray Request is not valid for other vegetation Control companies performing work in these described areas.
- 3.10 If the Owner's Control measures are not deemed adequate prior August 1, they shall be contacted by the County and shall then have five working days to correct the problem and if Control measures have not taken place in this period, the County's staff shall, at the discretion of the Fieldman, then remedy the situation by whatever means deemed appropriate and the No Spray Request may be terminated indefinitely.
- 3.11 Indemnify of Mountain View County will be required in the No Spray Request.
- 3.12 The No Spray Request is not transferable and shall be considered void if ownership of the property changes.

#### **4. Mowing Procedures**

- 4.1 Mowing operations shall annually occur consistent with the standards and good practices as set out under the Professional Vegetation Managers Association of Alberta (PVMA) Standards and Good Practices.
- 4.2 Mowing operations shall commence each year when the Fieldman determines significant growth.
- 4.3 All hard top Roads shall be mowed once with a second mowing later in the season.
- 4.4 All gravel Roads shall be mowed once, a second cut can be requested by Operational Services and upon Fieldman and budget approval will be added to the mowing schedule.
- 4.5 Mowing requests by Operational Services shall be handled in a timely and efficient manner once approved by the Fieldman.
- 4.6 Equipment selection for each project will be selected with the employee, public and environment health and safety in mind.
- 4.7 Mowing equipment shall be equipped with visibility warning devices in an attempt to be visible on the Roadways and Work Areas.

4.8 Mowing operations shall be performed keeping traffic safety in mind at all times. Mowing shall only be conducted during daylight hours and at times of good visibility.

4.9 All safety equipment required as per the manufacture(s) shall be the responsibility of the staff to wear.

## **5. Seeding Procedures**

5.1 A certified seed blend decided upon and approved by the Fieldman shall be utilized in all County seeding operations.

5.2 Early establishing and aggressive plant varieties shall be preferred to help reduce Weed establishment.

5.3 When suitable broadleaf varieties shall be added to help encourage diversity.

5.4 Seeding rates shall be determined by the Fieldman.

5.6 Activities shall be conducted only when environmental conditions are favorable.

5.7 Seeding equipment shall be equipped with visibility warning devices in an attempt to be visible on the Roadways and Work Areas.

5.8 Equipment selection for each project will be selected with the employee, public and environmental health and safety in mind.

5.9 Seeding operations shall be performed keeping traffic safety in mind at all times. Seeding shall only be conducted during daylight hours and at times of good visibility.

5.10 All safety equipment required as per the manufacture(s) shall be the responsibility of the staff to wear.

## **6. Pedestrian Encounters**

6.1 All activities shall be stopped when Pedestrian safety is of concern and will restart when safe to do so. For Pesticide application, the Pedestrian shall be consulted and made aware of the operation and best course of action, Label and SDS's will be provided upon request. Operations shall cease in the area until safe to proceed.

6.2 Pedestrian shall be advised on best course of action to avoid health and safety concerns.

6.3 Any concerns from Pedestrians shall be addressed and the Fieldman shall be notified immediately.

## **7. Apiculture Conditions**

7.1 Mountain View County recommends that beekeepers advise the County of beehive locations and enter into a No Spray Request.

7.2 Beekeepers shall be encouraged to place beehives a minimum of 30 meters from the Roadways.

7.3 Beekeepers shall be encouraged to place beehives in areas that do not contain Prohibited Noxious and Noxious Weeds.

- 7.4 Beekeepers are encouraged to discuss potential concerns with neighboring landowners and rental landowners prior to placing the beehives.
- 7.5 Mountain View County shall make best efforts to work with beekeepers to limit herbicide use around beehives. When feasible spray operations shall be coordinated with the beekeeper to minimize disturbance of the bees and the hives. Considerations such as application timing, Pesticide usage, and environmental conditions shall be taken into consideration.