



Section One

This section provides an introduction to *Develop with Care 2014: Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia* and describes the provincial government’s approach to results-based management.

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Introduction

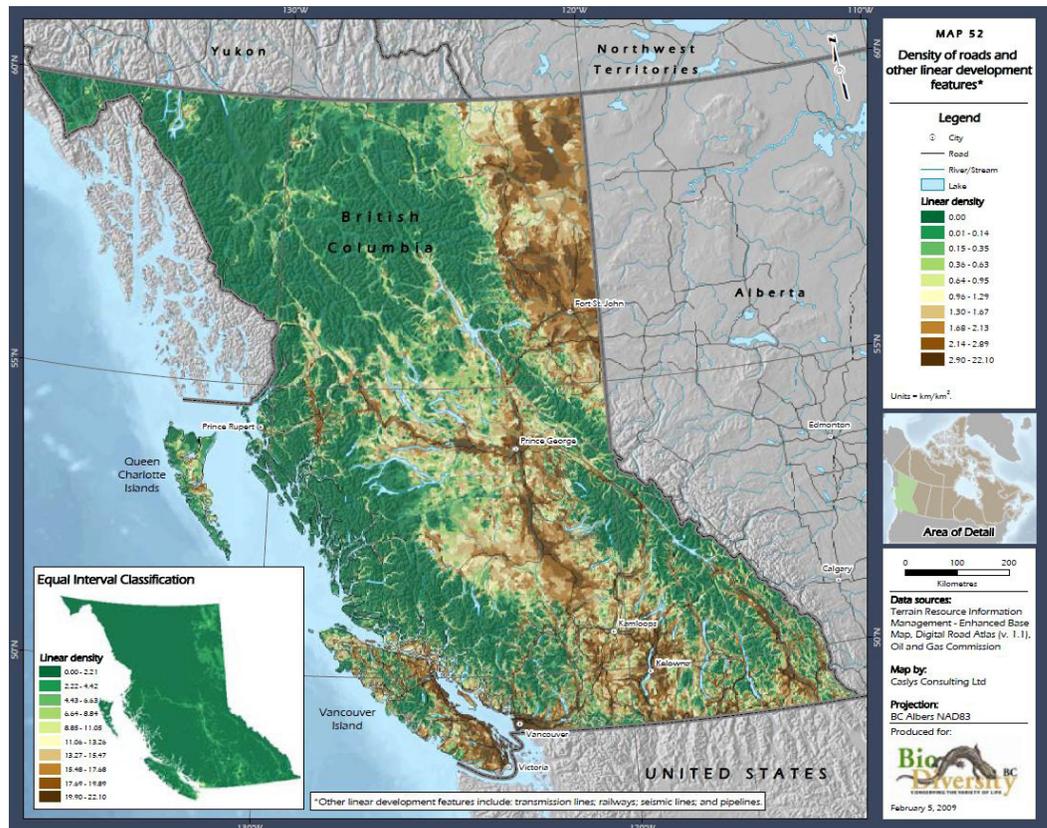
A healthy natural environment is the foundation of British Columbia’s economy and quality of life. We—governments, the private sector, and civil society—all have a part to play in its protection.

British Columbia (B.C.) is recognized globally for its exceptional wildlife, diversity of ecosystems and rich natural resources. These valuable natural assets provide the essentials of life, as well as recreational activities and economic opportunities that are enjoyed by British Columbians throughout the province. However, rapid urbanization, especially in the southern areas of the province, has resulted in significant impacts on the natural environment, including an increase in the numbers of plant and animal species ‘at risk’, and a declining community livability ([Ministry of Environment 2014](#)). **Figure 1-1** demonstrates that human settlement and transportation corridors have impacted large areas of the province.

It is essential to maintain B.C.’s **natural capital**¹ during urban and rural land development.² A healthy environment enhances the quality of life for the whole community and benefits residents by providing free ‘ecosystem

Figure 1-1: Density of roads and other linear development features

Source: Biodiversity BC. 2009. Biodiversity Atlas of British Columbia.



1 **Highlighted** items are defined in the Glossary
2 See Appendix C: Benefits of Environmental Protection



services' such as clean air, clean water, erosion control, and climate mitigation and adaptation. Developers also benefit from careful attention to natural values, which add economic value to the sale price of property and can reduce costs. Implementing good environmental practices also ensures compliance with federal and provincial legislation and demonstrates due diligence in environmental protection and stewardship.

The impacts of loss or degradation of natural capital are often not appreciated until after it is too late; yet it is often more expensive and less effective to attempt to restore an ecosystem and its services after it has been damaged, than it is to protect it in the first place. The ongoing values of natural ecosystems and their services need to be considered carefully during land use decisions.

1.1. Purpose and Scope of Guidelines

The B.C. Ministry of Environment prepared *Develop with Care: Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia (2006)* to provide province-wide guidelines for maintaining environmental values during the development of urban and rural lands.

Develop with Care 2012: Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia was jointly prepared by the B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Ministry of Environment, providing a significant update to the 2006 document including ideas and suggestions on ways to achieve 'cleaner, greener' developments and provides information on ways that environmental protection and stewardship can benefit the community, the property owner, and the developer, as well as the natural environment.

Develop with Care is one in a series of environmental guideline documents prepared by the Province of British Columbia. Many of these are available from the [Guidelines and Best Management Practices](#) website. *Develop with Care 2014* provides some additional updates and information, notably in relation to water and waste management.

For simplicity, this document primarily refers to "the Province" or "the provincial government" rather than the individual Ministries.



We all have a part to play in environmental protection.
Photo: Judith Cullington

There are many types of 'development', including commercial and residential developments and redevelopments, public works and parks projects, building construction projects, flood protection works, campground developments, recreational infrastructures, and any other activities that affect the natural landscape.



1.2 The Stewardship Model and Results-based Decisions

The *Develop with Care* guidelines provide leadership and support that empowers British Columbians to achieve excellent environmental stewardship and sustainability during land development. The guidelines are based on science and experience, and build on the leadership being shown by many local governments and developers to create sustainable communities and developments. Land use and development decisions are shared by many; therefore, this document is intended to support and encourage good decision making by all those involved in land development in British Columbia.

This document is written for:

- local government decision makers
- planners
- engineers
- approving officers
- parks & recreation staff
- public works staff
- other agencies that make land use decisions
- developers
- consultants
- architects
- landscape architects
- land surveyors
- landowners
- real estate agents
- others involved in land development decisions

This document is written for:

- People who set the stage for development—local governments who develop community plans and supporting bylaws, as well as community groups, agencies, and consultants who provide input;
- People who review and approve the developments—local governments (both elected and staff), approving officers, community groups, and others who comment on proposed developments; and
- People who design and build developments—landowners, developers and the many consultants who work with them, as well as the staff who develop and manage local government lands and infrastructure.

The guidelines are part of a results-based approach to land use decisions. Decisions regarding environmental protection and stewardship are prescribed in a variety of provincial and federal legislation and regulations (see summary in [Appendix A](#)). In addition to these mandatory requirements, the Province sets out objectives that local governments and the development community are expected to meet. However, the way in which those objectives are met are often best decided at a local or site level, hence they are not prescribed in legislation.

Red-tailed Hawk. Photo: G. Logan Photography. picturebc.ca





Best practices may vary by location.
Photo: Judith Cullington

The guidelines in *Develop with Care* are based on current science and staff expertise and experience. If local governments and developers are faced with legal action, they may be expected to demonstrate that they have used **due diligence** to avoid or mitigate environmental problems created by land development activities. Demonstrating that they have followed the guidelines provided in this document will strengthen this due diligence defence.

Risk: the chance of something happening that will have an impact on the achievement of objectives

Due diligence: the level of judgment, care, prudence, determination, and activity that a person would reasonably be expected to undertake under certain circumstances

It is recognized that the ‘best’ practice for a given location may vary. A results-based approach benefits land developers by allowing them the opportunity to use creative approaches to meet the Province’s environmental standards. This model relies on the professional accountability of qualified professionals and the attendant codes of practice and ethics of their governing bodies. An approach designed for a specific location may be less expensive and/or less time-consuming for the developer and approval agency; however, in taking on this responsibility, land developers and approval agencies will also take on **risk** and should identify and develop strategies for managing it. When land development is not properly planned and implemented, the developer’s risks could include increased costs, delays, or legal consequences. Local governments could face impacts on existing municipal infrastructure and quality of life for residents, and may also risk legal consequences. In addition, long-term environmental impacts may occur.



For Further Information

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Regions

For more information on other guidelines documents in this series, please see the [Guidelines and Best Practices webpage](#) or contact your nearest [Ministry office](#):

Cariboo Region

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
Cariboo Regional Office
400 - 640 Borland Street,
Williams Lake, B.C. V2G 4T1
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Kootenay Boundary Region

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
Kootenay Boundary Office
205 Industrial Rd. G
Cranbrook, BC V1C 7G5
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Northeast Region

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
Northeast Office
400 10003 110th Avenue
Fort Saint John, BC V1J 6M7
(250) 787-3411

Omineca Region

Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations
Omineca Regional Office
4051 18th Avenue
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Phone: (250) 565-6135

Skeena Region

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
Skeena Regional Office
3726 Alfred Avenue
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0
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South Coast Region

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
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2nd Floor, #10470 152nd Street
Surrey B.C. V3R 0Y3
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Thompson-Okanagan Region

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
Regional Office (Thompson)
1259 Dalhousie Drive
Kamloops BC V2C 5Z5
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Regional Office (Okanagan)

102 Industrial Place
Penticton B.C. V2A 7C8
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West Coast Region

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
West Coast Regional Office
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Nelson Office
401-333 Victoria Street
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Penticton Office
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Nanaimo Office
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Great Camus.
Photo: Judith Cullington

