CHAPTER 4.0

EDMONTON REGIONAL NATURAL AREAS MAP

4.0 EDMONTON REGION NATURAL AREAS MAP

The Significant Natural Areas of the Edmonton Region map (next page) depicts Edmonton's regionally-significant Natural Areas in a regional, landscape scale setting. It portrays the spatial relationships between Edmonton's Natural Areas and the regionally-significant natural sites that lie outside of the City. The map demonstrates which of Edmonton's resources occur in proximity to those in adjacent municipalities and which are physically connected to those resources.

The most significant natural feature of the entire region is the North Saskatchewan River Valley. The NSRV's significance is attributable to more than its relatively large size. The river valley's central position in Edmonton, its extension beyond the regional study area's boundaries, it's dendritic tributary system that snakes through the surrounding tablelands, and, the valley's aquatic and vegetated nature make it a key feature that provides for the flow of multiple resources through the landscape and connects this region to resources further afield.

Other relatively large, protected areas in the region include Lois Hole Provincial Park, Elk Island National Park, the Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Recreation Area, and Ministik Game Bird Sanctuary. A host of much smaller, unlabelled sites is also distributed across the region, including the Clifford E. Lee and Wagner Bog Natural Area, both of which are well-known and well-used sites with reputations as regionally-significant resources that also serve as nature appreciation/interpretation amenities.

Aquatic linkages in general are perhaps the most obvious connecting feature of this regional map. These networks form a web extending across the entire area. These river and stream systems, which often have development limitations related to steep valley slopes, provide the most continuous natural linkages through the region, including in Edmonton. These drainage systems also physically connect with the larger protected areas, or lie within a short distance of them. They act as vectors for nutrient, seed and animal dispersal.