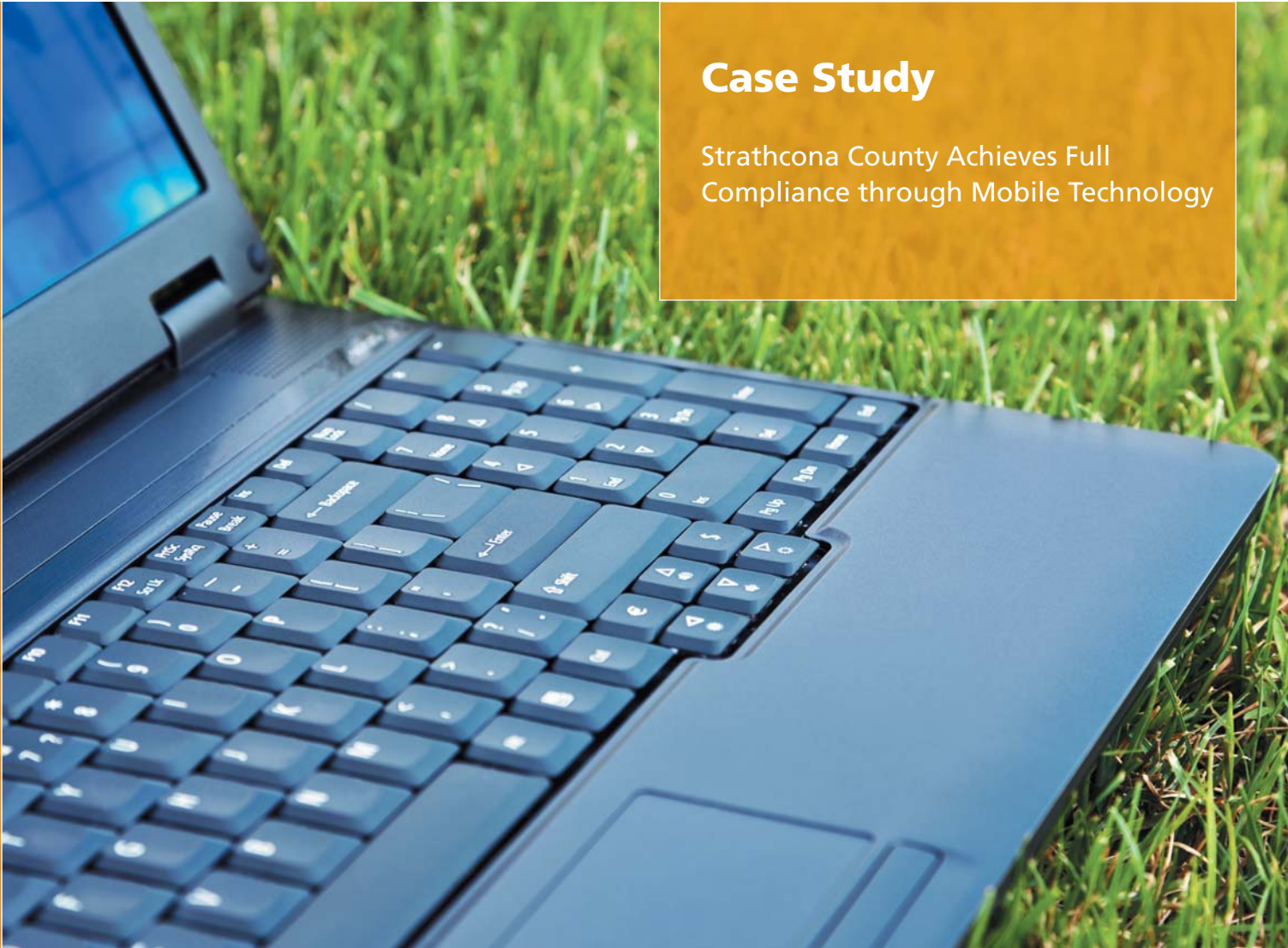




ESRI Canada

Case Study

Strathcona County Achieves Full Compliance through Mobile Technology



Vegetation Management Solution Responds to Demands of Provincial Legislation

In 2010, Alberta introduced new weed control legislation that demands greater compliance among municipalities while emphasizing surveillance and early detection. In response, Strathcona County overhauled their existing approach to vegetation management and shifted to a mobile method of data collection. Through a customized mobile solution, the County was able to fully comply with new control measures, improve data accuracy, and vastly streamline the process of vegetation inspection.

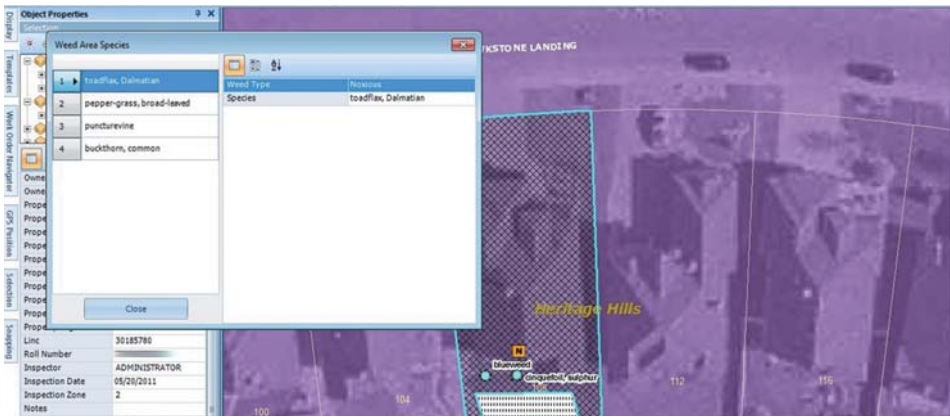


Challenge

The new Alberta Weed Control Act seeks to protect and enhance the health of rural land across the province through inspection, enforcement and provisions for the recovery of expenses in cases of non-compliance. Regulations within the Act promote early detection and rapid response – efforts that serve to protect the competitiveness of Alberta’s agricultural industry while stimulating economic development.

Though the Act supports a more streamlined approach to land protection, it introduces new compliance challenges for municipalities. For example, municipalities are now subject to an expanded list of invasive plants that must be controlled and maintained. They are also required to hand-deliver inspection notices to property owners; they can no longer disperse notices by mail only.

Strathcona County’s Agricultural Services branch was subscribing to a largely manual process of weed control. Field inspectors would sketch out weed infestations on a notepad, return to the office to enter data into an Access database and finally, mail inspection notices to residents. This time-consuming process required a significant amount of drive time and did not comply with new regulations mandating the hand delivery of inspection notices. The County also lacked a formal complaints management system, so it was difficult to track the status of complaints and deploy resources when and where they were needed.



“Without adopting a mobile solution, we simply would not have been able to comply with new legislation. Access to real-time data means that work is never duplicated and the entire organization is informed of the latest, ongoing activity.”

Data can be captured in the field and automatically synchronized back to the County's enterprise geodatabase.

Sean Smyth
GIS Analyst
Strathcona County

Solution

After a thorough business requirements gathering process, Strathcona selected Clearion's mobile GIS and work management solution. Built using ESRI's ArcEngine technology, the solution employs geodatabase replication so that data can be captured in the field and automatically synchronized back to the County's ArcGIS Server enterprise geodatabase. As a fully customizable solution, the County was able to configure the user interface to allow for easy map browsing and navigation. Tailored workflows were also developed to support a fast and efficient vegetation inspection process.

Through ruggedized tablets, field inspectors are now equipped with remote access to near-real time GIS data along with customized data entry forms, tools and reporting functionality. Using stylus pens, they can accurately sketch out polygons, edit spatial information, and send this data to the central geodatabase, for instant updates. They can also take photos and record notes on infestation areas and automatically deliver this information back to the dispatcher.

The mobile solution promotes a two-way flow of communication, enabling complaints and service calls to be directly communicated to inspectors in the field. Leveraging the solution's workforce management capabilities, users can then create, share, track and audit the status of complaints and post-work inspections. Field inspectors can also create and deliver inspection notices on site.

Benefits

Strathcona is unique in that it combines a bustling urban area with a large rural landscape. Prior to leveraging mobile technology, inspectors were limited in the number of properties they could inspect across the vast landscape, as a large portion of time was spent driving back and forth from the field to the office.

The entire vegetation inspection process can now be conducted on site. Field inspectors no longer need to return to the office to upload data, and have instant, remote access to information regarding new complaints that require inspection. As a result, more properties are visited per day, and data accuracy is greatly enhanced through the elimination of manual entry.

Rather than rely on roughly drafted sketches, field inspectors can also now accurately capture and share information on the type of weed inspected, the land parcel where the infestation occurs as well as the date and time of inspection. They are also able to fully comply with newly mandated legislation by printing and delivering inspection notices to property owners onsite.

Through a formal work tracking system, Strathcona has been able to develop a solid track record of completed work so that they can identify patterns across the County, and modify schedules and budgets to prepare for the coming year.



ESRI Canada

esricanada.com

ESRI Canada Limited

12 Concorde Place
Suite 900
Toronto, ON M3C 3R8
T: 416-441-6035
F: 416-441-6838

Customer Care

1-800-447-9778
info@esricanada.com

Technical Support

1-877-441-0337
support@esricanada.com

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Vancouver: 604-682-4652
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