

Discussion Guide - Draft South Saskatchewan Regional Plan Workbook

Summary of Responses

INTRODUCTION

Alberta is a growing province. Today's scale and pace of resource development and population growth requires an integrated and coordinated resource management approach that examines the combined effects of past, present and future land-uses. Alberta's Land-use Framework (LUF), released in December 2008, sets out a new approach to managing our province's land and natural resources to achieve Alberta's long-term economic, environmental and social goals. The LUF establishes seven new land-use regions and calls for the development of a regional plan for each. The *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* supports the LUF and establishes the legal basis for the development of regional plans. Regional plans reconcile provincial policies and set explicit regional outcomes and objectives.

Regional planning is part of the Government of Alberta's Integrated Resource Management System (IRMS). IRMS provides a holistic view of managing and monitoring our natural assets. The intent is to realize benefits for today while ensuring benefits for future generations by examining the relationships and impacts of managing multiple resources and forms of land-use. Integrated resource management means taking all the values, priorities and all the effects into consideration for more comprehensive decision-making. The system is founded on setting and managing to clear policies and cumulative outcomes (through regional plans), providing assurance and a monitoring and measurement system to measure the achievement of outcomes. The system is dynamic and adaptive as necessary to reflect new information and also collaborative - achieving desired outcomes requires working with stakeholders and partners.

Regional plans are a key component of the integrated resource management system and provide the policy integration, direction and clarity needed to help decision-makers make decisions that collectively reflect and support the needs and values of Albertans. Contributions from the South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council, Aboriginal peoples, stakeholders, municipalities and the public have informed the development of the draft South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP). Development of the draft SSRP utilized input and feedback received through two phases of consultation:

- input on the region's issues; and
- feedback on the advice from the South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council.

Prior to approving the SSRP, the Government will review and consider the feedback received during phase three consultations for the draft SSRP.

The Purpose of the Regional Plan

The regional plan as is set a vision of how a region should look over several decades. Each regional plan will consider a planning horizon of at least 50 years. The regional plan will be assessed, and if necessary, updated every five years to maintain its relevance and effectiveness while maintaining certainty, stability and commitment to regulatory intent. Any subsequent revisions to the plan require consultations with Albertans.

The regional plan is not intended to describe how your neighbourhood will look in the future, or set rules about your local property. Municipal governments continue to be responsible for local land-use planning through municipal plans and land-use bylaws.

The regional plan will set the vision, outcomes and objectives for a region. It will identify areas with high value for conservation, agriculture, recreation or industrial development to better co-ordinate activity on the landscape. In making these choices, the regional plan will consider how to balance Albertan's economic, environmental and social values.

Regional plans will also consider how activities in one region may impact other regions. For example, airsheds and watersheds often cross regional boundaries, as do many transportation and utility corridors.

Although a regional plan will not ordinarily direct uses on lands under federal jurisdiction, it will consider their long-term needs and how they may impact objectives in the region.

Developing the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan

The Government of Alberta is working towards the development of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan. In May 2009, the government established a Regional Advisory Council (RAC) to provide advice, insight and perspective on current and future land-use activities and challenges in the region. The RAC was comprised of members with a cross-section of expertise and experience in the South Saskatchewan Region. RAC submitted its advice to the Alberta Government in early 2011. For further information, visit the Land Use Framework website: www.landuse.alberta.ca.

The Government received feedback from Albertans on this advice until late 2012. Considering this advice and feedback, the Government of Alberta developed a draft regional plan for the South Saskatchewan Region.

REGIONAL VISION

(Draft Plan pages 35-37)



In consideration of feedback received from Albertans during consultation on the RAC's advice, the Government of Alberta has developed a proposed vision describing the desired future for the region that supports the outcomes and principles outlined in the Land-use Framework.

Proposed Regional Vision Statement

Southern Alberta is a diverse, healthy, vibrant and prosperous region where the natural beauty of the mountains, foothills, farmlands and prairies are managed so that citizens feel connected to the land and its history. The region is a thriving place that offers a wide range of opportunities to residents and visitors alike. Social, economic and environmental values are effectively achieved with shared stewardship and an integrated approach. The quality and integrity of the landscape is sustained through the use of science, innovative thinking, traditional aboriginal and community knowledge, recognizing the interests

of all Albertans.

Share your Views

1. Does the proposed regional vision reflect your personal vision and expectations for the South Saskatchewan Region?

No

2. If No, what changes would you propose for the vision?

I would like the Vision Statement for the SSRP to ensure the sustainability of suitable recreational trails for 4 Wheel Drive vehicles that meet the needs of recreational users of those trails, as well as meeting and supporting the tourism, watershed and wildlife conservation goals of the SSRP. I propose that this vision can be met through a principled approach, similar to the 4E's that have been used by the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org/>) to successfully manage recreation on public land.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

(Draft Plan pages 59-66)



Overview :

The South Saskatchewan region has a diverse economy. Key land-use industry sectors include agriculture, energy, forestry, tourism, recreation and surface materials. The South Saskatchewan Region is one of the most populated regions in the province containing approximately 45 per cent of Alberta's population and has continued to grow. In the last decade, the region's economy and population both grew by more than 28 per cent .

The economy of southern Alberta will continue to rely on having secure water resources and sustainable healthy ecosystems. Effective management of water, watersheds and biodiversity will be critical to achieving a diverse, healthy, vibrant and prosperous region.

Many of the economic strategies are provincial in scope; however, the draft SSRP reinforces, at a regional level, Government of Alberta policy direction which supports continued economic growth and diversification. Specifically, the draft SSRP establishes objectives and strategies to support key land-use sectors.

What's Proposed

Energy (Petroleum and Natural Gas, Coal and Minerals)

Objectives:

- Opportunities for the responsible exploration, development and extraction of energy resources are maintained.

Strategies:

- Ensure rules **regarding access to energy and processing and transportation of energy resources** are clear and ensure economic development opportunities are appropriately considered against other land uses and values.
- Maintain **physical access to freehold** (i.e., privately owned) petroleum and natural gas, coal and minerals.

Renewable Energy

Objectives:

- Opportunities for the responsible development of the region's renewable energy industry are maintained in support of Alberta's commitment to CO2 emission reduction targets and economic development
- Value-added opportunities that enhance the sustainability of Alberta's industries and communities are created.

Strategies:

- Ensure policies are in place to promote and remove barriers to **new investments in renewable energy** (i.e., wind, biofuels, solar, hydro) production.
- Invest in the development, demonstration and deployment of **renewable and alternative energy technologies** targeted to improve Alberta's overall energy efficiency. This will include support for the application of new technologies and support on-going research and development in partnership with other institutions.
- Ensure reinforcement of the **transmission system** to enable more renewable wind power in the region.

Co-location of Linear Infrastructure

Objectives:

- The region's infrastructure is planned to facilitate economic and population growth and efficient use of land.

Strategies:

- Ensure that opportunities for future routes and siting for **pipeline gateways, transportation corridors and utility and electrical transmission corridors** are maintained in the region and in consideration of

the needs of adjacent Land-use Framework regions and provinces.

- b. Work with municipalities, landowners and industry to explore **multi-use corridors** for co-location of linear infrastructure that supports **critical economic linkages** to markets for expanded access.

Surface Materials

Objectives:

- Opportunities for the responsible development of surface materials resources are maintained on public lands.

Strategies:

- a. **Allocate the surface materials** appropriately and monitor extraction operations to provide opportunities for sustainable development of the land.
- b. Municipalities, in collaboration with the industry, provincial government and other stakeholders are encouraged to **identify areas of existing and future extraction of surface materials** (e.g. sand and gravel) and mineral resources, and determine appropriate land use in the vicinity of the resources.

Agriculture

Objective:

- The region's agricultural industry is maintained and diversified

Strategies:

- a. **Maintain an agricultural land base** by reducing the fragmentation and conversion of agricultural land.
- b. Support a diverse, innovative and **value-added agriculture and agri-food sector** in the South Saskatchewan Region through implementation of *Alberta's Irrigation: A Strategy for the Future*.
- c. Assist the agriculture and agri-food industry to **maximize opportunities for value-added agricultural products by focusing on workforce development, investment, attraction and domestic and international market development**.
- d. Support a business climate, complementary production and marketing approach that **recognize local, domestic and international market opportunities** for Alberta's agriculture, agri-food and agri-product sectors.
- e. Support and enhance the **next generation of agricultural, food and rural entrepreneurs**.

Forestry

Objective:

- The region's forest industry is maintained and diversified

Strategies:

- a. **Promote the diversification** of the forest industry through implementation of **The Alberta Forest Products Roadmap to 2020** which will identify opportunities to diversify the sector through new markets and products, including the bioenergy sector.
- b. Deliver an effective **forest health management program to mitigate risk to timber supply and forest health**.
- c. **Incorporate wildfire management planning** into forest initiatives including development of landscape wildfire risk assessments, landscape disturbance planning and FireSmart strategies. Forest management activities - such as burning, thinning, and timber harvesting - will support meeting community and landscape-level FireSmart objectives.

Tourism

Objective:

- The region is positioned as a world-class, year-round, tourism destination.

Strategies:

- a. Enhance **iconic tourism destinations** within the South Saskatchewan Region by engaging with aboriginal communities, municipalities and local stakeholders (See Appendix E - Iconic Tourism Destinations: Kananaskis, Canadian Badlands and Southern Rockies).
- b. Work with municipalities, private investors and landowners to identify areas of high value for recreation and tourism, and to **encourage tourism investment and infrastructure development opportunities** on identified lands.
- c. Work with municipal governments and other partners to identify, establish and promote scenic byways in and around areas with high-quality attractions and recreation and tourism features. This would include routes, trails and waterways to create distinctive travel experiences and showcase the region's unique scenic resources and cultural landscapes.
- d. Provide **long term security** (i.e., longer term leases) for tourism and recreation investment opportunities.

3. **How strongly do you support or not support the suite of economic objectives and strategies for achieving a growing and diversified economy for the South Saskatchewan Region?**

Strongly Support

4. **Please provide any additional comments with regards to the economic outcome - the region's economy is growing and diversified. Is there anything missing that would help to achieve this regional outcome?**

Motorized Offroad Recreation is a tourism opportunity for people of all ages, regardless of handicaps or stature to enjoy Alberta's iconic outdoors. Recreational Trails can be compatible with conservation by using a principle based trail management framework that encompasses these 5 E's: Experience – Master Trail Planning which incorporates ecological, social and trail sustainability while providing the Experience Albertan's desire. Engineering – Budget and Implementation capability to create sustainable trails, not just re-use unsustainable existing linear disturbances Education – to ensure users know what to expect, what to do, and their responsibilities on the trails Enforcement – to ensure compliance with the plan Evaluation – to continuously improve the plan

CONSERVING AND MAINTAINING THE BENEFITS OF BIODIVERSITY



(Draft Plan pages 38, 39, 66-75)

Overview

- The benefits we receive from biodiversity and healthy functioning ecosystems are critical components to the ongoing prosperity of all Albertans. However, these natural features are sensitive to the impacts of human development.
- Conserving a range of landscapes provides habitat that will support species and biological diversity that depend on these landscapes. Connectivity of wildlife habitat across landscapes is also an important factor in maintaining biodiversity.
- Regional plans are developed using a cumulative effects approach which considers the combined effects of activities taking place over time.
- A biodiversity management framework is a new approach to support cumulative effects management of important elements of biodiversity that are affected by land uses in the region.
- Cumulative effects are considered to be the combined effects of past, present and reasonably foreseeable future land-use activities on the environment. Although past cumulative effects are considered it is not the intention of the biodiversity management framework to return Alberta to the levels of biodiversity found prior to European settlement. Today's Alberta includes working landscapes, and the Land-use Framework acknowledges the need to balance environmental, social and economic considerations. The focus of the framework is from today into the future, where information from modeled predictions of the past conditions could inform decision-making about future conditions.
- Achieving the objectives for biodiversity, functioning ecosystems and natural landscapes will require a full range of management approaches and tools in order to address the complex mix of public lands and private land and how they can contribute to those objectives. This means further advancing conservation and integrated management of Crown land, and supporting and enabling voluntary stewardship and conservation on private land.

What's Proposed

- Complete the South Saskatchewan Biodiversity Management Framework (by end of 2014)
- The biodiversity management framework for the region will contain targets for selected biodiversity indicators and the actions needed to achieve them. Primary indicators will be identified based on two areas of focus:
 - Eastern Slopes/Parkland/Foothills Fescue area
 - Grasslands
- The framework will inform regional and sub-regional planning decisions about future land use activities and the management of existing activities. Meeting biodiversity established in the framework will depend on a number of actions related to minimizing human footprint on public lands. The framework will establish a system for focusing on outcomes and results rather than prescriptive requirements.
- New conservation areas and linear footprint management planning will be the major actions supporting biodiversity objectives and targets in the framework.
- Similar to other Environmental Management Frameworks proposed in the plan, the Biodiversity Management Framework's objectives will apply to the entire region (including private lands).
- However, it is recognized that any actions by landowners towards meeting objectives is voluntary and subject to availability and landowner interest to use tools such as conservation easements and other mechanisms described in the section on Stewardship and Conservation on Private Lands.

5. How strongly do you support or not support the concept of a biodiversity management framework for the region?

[Somewhat Support](#)

5a. Why do you support?

Most Albertans, including motorized users, enjoy our back country because the rivers are clean, there are fish in the waters, and animals in the forests. We genuinely value our back country, and wish to preserve it, and request that the SSRP include a new management framework to ensure that these natural areas are preserved for all Albertans. The SSRP needs to include more advanced management tools, such as those that have been used by the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org/>) to successfully manage recreation on public land. A 5 E's management framework: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation will meet the goals both of conservation and Motorized Offroad Recreation.

5b. Why do not you support?

Recreational Trails need not be incompatible with conservation. While it may have been in the past using the Access Management Plans to manage motorized recreation, it does not have to when using the 5E's Management Framework. There are several examples where recreation, including motorized recreation on sustainable trails is managed in sensitive conservation areas. For Example, The US National Parks Service allows four wheel drive vehicles to use trails in several National Parks, including Canyonlands Park in Utah, and Death Valley in California. These parks utilize the 5E's to sustainably manage motorized recreation in a conservation area.

6. Please provide any additional comments about the proposal for a biodiversity management framework for the region.

The SSRP needs to include an outline for the development of a Motorized Offroad Recreation Management Plan for each zone based on the 5 E's Management Framework. Specifically, these 5 E's are: Experience – Master Trail Planning which incorporates ecological, social and trail sustainability while providing the Experience Albertan's desire; Engineering – Budget and Implementation capability to create sustainable trails, not just re-use unsustainable existing linear disturbances; Education – to ensure users know what to expect, what to do, and their responsibilities on the trails; Enforcement – to ensure compliance with the plan; Evaluation – to continuously improve the plan. Motorized Offroad Recreation Trails can and should exist in Alberta, and can be compatible with conservation.

ADVANCING CONSERVATION AND INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF CROWN LAND

(Draft Plan pages 39-44, 66-75, Appendixes G and H)



Conservation

Overview

- The Government of Alberta is committed to balanced and responsible resource development that supports our desired environmental objectives.
- Establishing legislatively protected conservation areas is one approach that supports the achievement of our environmental objectives - including maintaining biodiversity and healthy ecosystems; protecting watersheds, water security and water quality; conserving important landscapes (e.g. native grasslands); and supporting management of species at risk (e.g. grizzly bear recovery).
 - The key criteria for the selection of conservation areas proposed for the South Saskatchewan Region are:
 - areas with little to no industrial activity;
 - areas that support aboriginal traditional uses;
 - areas that are representative of the biological diversity of the area (e.g., landforms, species, vegetation); and
 - areas of sufficient size.
- Conservation areas will be managed to minimize or prevent new land disturbance.
 - Land disturbance associated with oil and gas, mining, cultivated agriculture and commercial forestry operations are not considered compatible.
 - Private surface and freehold minerals rights are exempt from the restrictions associated with any part of this plan including conservation areas.
 - Low-impact backcountry recreation opportunities and nature-based tourism products and services will be provided.
 - Hunting, fishing, and trapping (including by aboriginal peoples) will continue in accordance with existing provincial laws governing such activities.
 - Off-highway vehicle use will be managed to designated trails and areas subject to the following:
 - Permitted on existing trails or where a management plan, trails plan or regulation specifies
 - Use of existing access can continue in areas where designation of trails has not occurred, but no new trails or routes or access may be developed without an access management plan
 - No motorized access is permitted in wetlands and water courses and will continue to be prohibited in the beds and shores of permanent water bodies.

Eastern Slopes - Conservation Areas

- In the eastern slopes protection of headwaters and water security continues to be a key management priority. Proposed conservation areas in the eastern slopes focus on the prime protection zone areas as described in the Eastern Slopes Policy. The existing management intent for these areas will continue. New legislative protection will be provided to these areas as it is proposed they be designated as Wildland Provincial Parks. Wildland Provincial Parks are established for the conservation of nature (and associated cultural features) with significant opportunities for backcountry/wilderness recreation and experiencing nature in a relatively undisturbed state. These areas will continue to support watershed management values, maintain healthy ecosystems and conserve important habitat.
- Currently approximately 22 per cent of the region's eastern slopes are legislatively protected as provincial conservation areas. The proposed new and expanded conservation areas will add an additional 11 per cent to a total of more than 33 per cent of this part of the region.
- Two existing Natural Areas, Mt. Livingstone and Beehive will be converted to Wildland Provincial Parks to better reflect their existing management intent.

Key Proposed Strategy

- Establish the following new and/or expanded Wildland Provincial Parks to meet objectives for biodiversity, species at risk and headwaters protection.

7. How strongly do you support or not support the following Wildland Provincial Parks be expanded or created?

Map

A	Don Getty (Expansion)	: Do Not Support
B	Bow Valley (Expansion)	: Do Not Support
C	Bluerock (Expansion)	: Do Not Support
F	Highrock (New)	: Do Not Support
G	Bob Creek (Expansion)	: Do Not Support
H	Livingstone Range (New)	: Do Not Support
I	Castle (New)	: Do Not Support

7a. Why do you support?

7b. Why do not you support?

The current SSRP's reliance on existing access management practices leads to the elimination of Motorized Offroad Recreation from some of Alberta's iconic areas, virtually removes the ability of handicapped Albertans from enjoying those same areas, and prohibits many world-class tourism opportunities. The SSRP needs to include allowance for the creation, expansion and maintenance of Motorized Offroad Trails based on the principles of 5 E's: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation. The SSRP also needs to include the Government of Alberta's commitment to support and enhance Motorized Offroad Recreation Trail growth and sustainability based on a proven successful approach such as that of the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org/>).

8. How strongly do you support or not support the following Natural Areas be designated as a Wildland Provincial Park?

Map

E	Beehive	: Do Not Support
D	Mt. Livingstone	: Do Not Support

8a. Why do you support?

8b. Why do not you support?

The current SSRP's reliance on existing access management practices leads to the elimination of Motorized Offroad Recreation from some of Alberta's iconic areas, virtually removes the ability of handicapped Albertans from enjoying those same areas, and prohibits many world-class tourism opportunities. The SSRP needs to include allowance for the creation, expansion and maintenance of Motorized Offroad Trails based on the principles of 5 E's: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation. The SSRP also needs to include the Government of Alberta's commitment to support and enhance Motorized Offroad Recreation Trail growth and sustainability based on a proven successful approach such as that of the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org/>).

9. Please provide any additional comments about the proposed Wildland Provincial Parks in the Eastern Slopes.

The SSRP needs to include an outline for the development of a Motorized Offroad Recreation Management Plan for each zone based on the 5 E's Management Framework. Specifically, these 5 E's are: Experience – Master Trail Planning which incorporates ecological, social and trail sustainability while providing the Experience Albertans desire; Engineering – Budget and Implementation capability to create sustainable trails, not just re-use unsustainable existing linear disturbances; Education – to ensure users know what to expect, what to do, and their responsibilities on the trails; Enforcement – to ensure compliance with the plan; Evaluation – to continuously improve the plan. Motorized Offroad Recreation Trails can and should exist in Alberta, and can be compatible with conservation.

Castle Conservation Area - Public Land Use Zone

(Draft Plan pages 39-44, 51-56)

Overview

- The Castle area has experienced a high demand for multiple uses for decades.
- Bordering Waterton National Park and located within the Crown of the Continent (the area of the Rocky Mountains where Alberta, British Columbia, and Montana meet), the Castle is valued for its diverse ecosystems.
- This area secures an important connection between the Alberta provincial parks system to the north, the British Columbia provincial parks system to the west and Waterton-Glacier International Park to the south.
- The management intent for this area will be for maintaining biodiversity and headwaters protection.
 - Forestry practices which support the management intent for the area will be permitted. Enhanced forestry practices may include winter only operations, restricted access and

enhanced buffer zones on riparian areas.

- The areas will be managed to minimize or prevent new land disturbance.

What's Proposed

- A Public Land Use Zone - Conservation Area (Map location K) designated under the *Public Lands Act* be established adjacent to the proposed Castle Wildland Provincial Park in the lower valley areas of south Castle.

10. How strongly do you support or not support establishing a Public Land Use Zone - Conservation Area to address the land management needs in the lower valley areas of the south Castle?

Do Not Support

10a. Why do you support?

10b. Why do not you support?

The current SSRP's reliance on existing access management practices leads to the elimination of Motorized Offroad Recreation from some of Alberta's iconic areas, virtually removes the ability of handicapped Albertans from enjoying those same areas, and prohibits many world-class tourism opportunities. The SSRP needs to include allowance for the creation, expansion and maintenance of Motorized Offroad Trails based on the principles of 5 E's: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation. The SSRP also needs to include the Government of Alberta's commitment to support and enhance Motorized Offroad Recreation Trail growth and sustainability based on a proven successful approach such as that of the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org>).

11. Please provide any additional comments about the proposed Public Land Use Zone - Conservation Area in the Castle.

The SSRP needs to include an outline for the development of a Motorized Offroad Recreation Management Plan for each zone based on the 5 E's Management Framework. Specifically, these 5 E's are: Experience – Master Trail Planning which incorporates ecological, social and trail sustainability while providing the Experience Albertans desire; Engineering – Budget and Implementation capability to create sustainable trails, not just re-use unsustainable existing linear disturbances; Education – to ensure users know what to expect, what to do, and their responsibilities on the trails; Enforcement – to ensure compliance with the plan; Evaluation – to continuously improve the plan. Motorized Offroad Recreation Trails can and should exist in Alberta, and can be compatible with conservation.

Fescue Grasslands Area - Pekisko Heritage Rangeland

(Draft Plan pages 39-44, 51-56, Appendixes D, F, G and H)

Overview

- The Pekisko rangelands include an area from the Highwood River to the Oldman River, and part of the Foothills Parkland natural sub-region. This is the largest contiguous block of native Foothills Parkland and Foothills Grassland in Canada.
- Stakeholders from agriculture, energy, and environmental non-government organizations have discussed the potential for this region to be protected from development demands.
- An area of public land in the Pekisko area is proposed to be legislatively protected as a Heritage Rangeland. This designation will preserve and protect the natural features that are representative of Alberta's prairies.
- Grazing will be used to maintain the grassland ecology of the Heritage Rangeland; the protected area will provide important habitat for wildlife.
- Responsibility for administration and management of lands designated as Heritage Rangelands in the region will be assigned to Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development.
- The area will be managed to minimize or prevent new land disturbance.
- Opportunities for further conservation management approaches will be explored with land owners and other stakeholders in areas of grasslands where there are significant gaps in protection for grasslands Natural Sub-regions, and where there is important habitat.

What's Proposed

- Establish a Heritage Rangeland in the Pekisko area to protect and sustain native grasslands.

12. How strongly do you support or not support the establishment of a Heritage Rangeland in the Pekisko Area?

Do Not Support

12a. Why do you support?

12b. Why do not you support?

The current SSRP's reliance on existing access management practices leads to the elimination of Motorized Offroad Recreation from some of Alberta's iconic areas, virtually removes the ability of

handicapped Albertans from enjoying those same areas, and prohibits many world-class tourism opportunities. The SSRP needs to include allowance for the creation, expansion and maintenance of Motorized Offroad Trails based on the principles of 5 E's: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation. The SSRP also needs to include the Government of Alberta's commitment to support and enhance Motorized Offroad Recreation Trail growth and sustainability based on a proven successful approach such as that of the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org/>).

13. Please provide any additional comments regarding the Pekisko Heritage Rangeland.

The SSRP needs to include an outline for the development of a Motorized Offroad Recreation Management Plan for each zone based on the 5 E's Management Framework. Specifically, these 5 E's are: Experience – Master Trail Planning which incorporates ecological, social and trail sustainability while providing the Experience Albertan's desire; Engineering – Budget and Implementation capability to create sustainable trails, not just re-use unsustainable existing linear disturbances; Education – to ensure users know what to expect, what to do, and their responsibilities on the trails; Enforcement – to ensure compliance with the plan; Evaluation – to continuously improve the plan. Motorized Offroad Recreation Trails can and should exist in Alberta, and can be compatible with conservation.

Eastern Slopes - Green Area Public Land

(Draft Plan pages 38-43, 51-56, 96-100, Appendixes B, D, F and G)

Overview

- Within the South Saskatchewan region, the Green Area is located mainly in the western part of the Region and encompasses the mountain and foothills of the Eastern Slopes.
- Public land in this area is managed for timber production, resource development, wildlife and fisheries, recreation and other uses. Agricultural use is limited to grazing where it is compatible with other uses.
- Significant portions of this area are experiencing cumulative impacts on land, headwaters, watersheds, native fisheries, and important habitat that supports grizzly bear recovery and other aspects of biodiversity due to industrial development, recreation and other uses that increases linear footprint.
- Currently the Green Area is managed through a number of Integrated Resource Plans, Public Land Use Zones (many with access management plans), surface requirements under the *Public Lands Act*; subsurface restrictions on sales of mineral rights; and voluntary actions such as Integrated Land Management (ILM) practices to minimize human foot print.
- SSRP replaces the East Slopes Policy within the region.
- Objectives for biodiversity and healthy ecosystem function will be incorporated as part of multiple objectives for the Green Area under the regional plan.
- Headwaters protection and water security will continue to be management priority.
- Forests in the Green Area will be managed for headwaters protection. Biodiversity management, forest ecosystem resiliency, and reduction of wildfire risk will also benefit from this management focus. The priority of headwaters protection for forest management in the region will be implemented in alignment with the Alberta Forests Strategy, which is under development as a provincial strategy.
- A combination of approaches will be required to meet the multiple objectives for biodiversity, headwaters protection, water security, economic development, and recreational access, and to address cumulative impacts on the landscape.
- Operational policy guidelines will be aligned and streamlined to ensure clarity for the single regulator and industry.

What's Proposed

- There will be enhanced management of linear footprint through a linear footprint management plan for the Green Area Public Lands to be completed by the end of 2017. The plan will:
 - initially focus on key headwater areas and core grizzly bear habitat areas;
 - outline a system to minimize extent, duration, and rate of linear footprint development in order to meet the objectives and targets established in the biodiversity management framework;
 - incorporate economic development needs and recreational access and trail needs; and
 - be developed collaboratively with stakeholders, First Nations and partners in the region (e.g. Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils) and leverage upon existing initiatives such as species at risk recovery plans.
- Engage in **collaborative outreach and education programs** that promote responsible land use and shared stewardship on the eastern slopes, including increasing awareness of existing requirements under the Public Lands Administration Regulation (particularly keeping motorized vehicles out of wetlands, rivers, streams, and lakes).
- Manage forests in the Green Area with **headwaters protection and integrity** (water storage, recharge, and release functions) as the highest management priority.
- Continue to work with other government agencies, other levels of government, landholders, non-government organizations, industry, the research community, and other partners within and outside of government to manage risk associated with **invasive species**.
- Future access and camping management will be determined through trail mapping, and through recreation and access management planning and linear footprint management planning with consultation. Priority areas are the area north of Castle, Livingstone, Porcupine Hills and Willow Creek (as described in the draft regional plan). The Government of Alberta will work collaboratively with stakeholders and trail associations to determine the appropriate trail network.
 - These plans will guide recreation and tourism development and management on public land and will provide the opportunity to expand outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism opportunities.
 - The SSRP will not eliminate random camping, rather the intent is to better manage the land where random camping is occurring by providing new areas to camp and a designated trail system.
 - New Public Land Recreation Areas (low infrastructure camping areas) will be established

in conjunction with other strategies for enhancing recreation and tourism opportunities. These sites will be located in highly popular areas of random camping on public lands. They will be developed to include basic amenities such as fire rings and gravel pad and no fees will be charged.

- There will be collaborative outreach and education programs to promote responsible land use and shared stewardship. This will include an "on the ground" program with seasonal outreach staff.
- **Public Land Use Zones** will be expanded or consolidated as appropriate to improve the province's ability to effectively manage public land across the Green Area, manage conflicts and undesirable impacts (See Appendix G in SSRP);
- More info on the suite of strategies proposed to enhancing recreation opportunities can be found on page 41 and 43 of the Draft Plan.
- For those **recreating on Green Area Public Land** (particularly random camping and Off-Highway Vehicle activities) on plan approval:
 - Public access to Green Area Public Lands will continue.
 - The Public Lands Administration Regulation contains rules recreational users must follow when recreating on public lands. These apply to all provincial land managed by Environment and Sustainable Resource Development under the *Public Lands Act* (including lands within Public Land Use Zones). There will be no change to the application of these requirements.
 - Regulations will be amended to ensure the protection of watercourses, water bodies and wetland areas.
 - Regulations will be amended to ensure avoidance of camping and off-highway vehicle recreation near industrial facility areas (e.g. well sites) for safety reasons.
 - The existing 10 Public Use Zones will stay in place. Existing access management plans (as listed above will continue to apply.

Share Your Views

14. How strongly do you support or not support the combination of approaches and proposed strategies in the Eastern Slopes - Green Area Public Land?

[Do Not Support](#)

14a. Why do you support?

14b. Why do not you support?

The current SSRP's reliance on existing access management practices leads to the elimination of Motorized Offroad Recreation from some of Alberta's iconic areas, virtually removes the ability of handicapped Albertans from enjoying those same areas, and prohibits many world-class tourism opportunities. The SSRP needs to include allowance for the creation, expansion and maintenance of Motorized Offroad Trails based on the principles of 5 E's: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation. The SSRP also needs to include the Government of Alberta's commitment to support and enhance Motorized Offroad Recreation Trail growth and sustainability based on a proven successful approach such as that of the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org/>).

It is proposed that following plan approval (plan implementation):

- Consolidate and expand Public Land Use Zones in the Green Area:

More info on the suite of strategies proposed to enhancing recreation opportunities can be found on pg.37.

Share Your Views

15. How strongly do you support or not support consolidation and expansion of Public Land Use zone in the Green Area?

[Do Not Support](#)

15a. Why do you support?

15b. Why do not you support?

The current SSRP's reliance on existing access management practices leads to the elimination of Motorized Offroad Recreation from some of Alberta's iconic areas, virtually removes the ability of handicapped Albertans from enjoying those same areas, and prohibits many world-class tourism opportunities. The SSRP needs to include allowance for the creation, expansion and maintenance of Motorized Offroad Trails based on the principles of 5 E's: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation. The SSRP also needs to include the Government of Alberta's commitment to support and enhance Motorized Offroad Recreation Trail growth and sustainability based on a proven successful approach such as that of the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org/>).

16. Please provide any comments about the proposed changes in the eastern slopes to achieve the objectives and address cumulative impacts on the landscape.

The SSRP needs to include an outline for the development of a Motorized Offroad Recreation Management Plan for each zone based on the 5 E's Management Framework. Specifically, these 5 E's are: Experience – Master Trail Planning which incorporates ecological, social and trail sustainability while providing the Experience Albertan's desire; Engineering – Budget and Implementation capability to create sustainable trails, not just re-use unsustainable existing linear disturbances; Education – to ensure users know what to expect, what to do, and their responsibilities on the trails; Enforcement – to ensure compliance with the plan; Evaluation – to continuously improve the plan. Motorized Offroad Recreation Trails can and should exist in Alberta, and can be compatible with conservation.

17. How strongly do you support or not support the development (working with stakeholders) of recreation and access management plans, by end of 2017, for the following areas?

Castle : Do Not Support
Porcupine Hills : Do Not Support
Livingstone : Do Not Support
Willow Creek : Do Not Support

17a. Why do you support?

17b. Why do not you support?

The current SSRP's reliance on existing access management practices leads to the elimination of Motorized Offroad Recreation from some of Alberta's iconic areas, virtually removes the ability of handicapped Albertans from enjoying those same areas, and prohibits many world-class tourism opportunities. The SSRP needs to include allowance for the creation, expansion and maintenance of Motorized Offroad Trails based on the principles of 5 E's: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation. The SSRP also needs to include the Government of Alberta's commitment to support and enhance Motorized Offroad Recreation Trail growth and sustainability based on a proven successful approach such as that of the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org/>).

Grasslands - White Area Public Land

(Draft Plan pages 44-45, Appendix D)

Overview

- In the White Area, public land is part of the agricultural landscape.
- It is managed for various uses including agriculture, recreation, soil and water conservation, resource development and fish and wildlife habitat.
- Some parts of the province have large tracts of public land while other parts have very few scattered parcels. Most of the public land in the White Area is under disposition or is otherwise committed.
- The unique aspect of these lands is that they contain native prairie with high ecological value for biodiversity and watershed protection and are habitat for the majority of species currently designated "at risk" in Alberta.
- Managing linear footprint is one of the most significant actions that can be taken to support biodiversity.
- The White Area public land will be managed for multiple uses and maintaining intact native grasslands and species at risk habitat will be a high priority.
 - Existing grazing activities will continue as carefully managed cattle grazing and traditional ranching practices on long-term grazing leases contribute to the ecological health of large tracts of remaining native grasslands.
 - Other uses will continue to be subject to existing standards and use of existing voluntary tools such as Integrated Land Management (ILM).
- A combination of management approaches will be required to meet the multiple objectives for biodiversity, economic development, and recreational access.
- There will be enhanced management of linear footprint through a linear footprint management plan for the White Area public lands to be complete by the end of 2017. The plan will:
 - initially focus on key areas of species at risk habitat and intact native grassland within the southeastern portion of the region;
 - order to meet the objectives and targets established in the South Saskatchewan Biodiversity Management Framework;
 - Be developed collaboratively with stakeholders, First Nations and partners in the region (e.g. Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils) and leverage upon existing initiatives such as species at risk recovery plans; and
 - Require use of Integrated Land Management tools.
- Operational policy guidelines will be aligned and streamlined to ensure clarity for the Alberta Energy Regulator and industry.

What's Proposed

It is proposed that following plan approval (plan implementation):

- Develop a linear footprint management plan for White Area public lands in the region by the end of 2017.
- Work with the ranching community and other stakeholders to **explore opportunities for further conservation management approaches.**
- **Minimize conversion of intact native grasslands** to other uses by not permitting sales of public lands in areas of intact native grasslands where no irrigation potential exists. Where irrigation potential exists, sales will still be considered (Map on page 128, Appendix H of the Draft Plan).

Share Your Views

18. How strongly do you support or not support the combination of approaches and proposed strategies in the Grasslands - White Area public land to achieve the expanded management intent to maintain intact native grasslands and species at risk habitat?

[Do Not Support](#)

- 18a. Why do you support?

- 18b. Why do not you support?

The current SSRP's reliance on existing access management practices leads to the elimination of Motorized Offroad Recreation from some of Alberta's iconic areas, virtually removes the ability of handicapped Albertans from enjoying those same areas, and prohibits many world-class tourism opportunities. The SSRP needs to include allowance for the creation, expansion and maintenance of Motorized Offroad Trails based on the principles of 5 E's: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation. The SSRP also needs to include the Government of Alberta's commitment to support and enhance Motorized Offroad Recreation Trail growth and sustainability based on a proven successful approach such as that of the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org/>).

19. How strongly do you support or not support the proposed changes in sales of intact native grasslands in the White Area public land?

- 19a. Why do you support?

- 19b. Why do not you support?

20. Please provide any comments about the proposed changes in the Grasslands - White Area public land to achieve the high priority of maintaining intact native grasslands and species at risk habitat.

The SSRP needs to include an outline for the development of a Motorized Offroad Recreation Management Plan for each zone based on the 5 E's Management Framework. Specifically, these 5 E's are: Experience – Master Trail Planning which incorporates ecological, social and trail sustainability while providing the Experience Albertan's desire; Engineering – Budget and Implementation capability to create sustainable trails, not just re-use unsustainable existing linear disturbances; Education – to ensure users know what to expect, what to do, and their responsibilities on the trails; Enforcement – to ensure compliance with the plan; Evaluation – to continuously improve the plan. Motorized Offroad Recreation Trails can and should exist in Alberta, and can be compatible with conservation.

Recreation and hunting or fishing access on White Area public land

(Draft Plan pages 39-44, 96-100)

In 2003, the Alberta Government clarified the rules for recreational and exploration access on agricultural dispositions issued under the *Public Lands Act*, including grazing leases and farm development leases. The legislation balances the needs of the leaseholders to protect the land and livestock from harm with the rights of the recreational users for reasonable access. The legislation also includes a process for addressing exploration disputes. The updated rules encourage communication, co-operation and respect.

As the holder of a grazing lease or farm development lease, leaseholders must allow reasonable access to the land for recreation. Leaseholders may have legitimate concerns about some recreational use. There are circumstances when access is not reasonable and under which leaseholders may restrict access or specify conditions for using the grazing or farm development lease. Generally, this would be based on protecting the land, grazing resource, or livestock from possible damage from the proposed activity, or on the timing or season of use. The Government of Alberta may also add conditions or restrictions on using the land. For example, these restrictions may be placed during times of high fire hazard or to protect the land from erosion.

Under the regulations, the leaseholder may deny access, or apply conditions to access, when:

- Access would be anything other than foot access, including bicycles, horse or other animal, or motor vehicles
- The proposed use would occur in a fenced pasture where livestock are present or on cultivated land on which a crop is growing or has not been harvested
- Access to all or part of the agricultural disposition land has been prohibited due to a fire ban as determined by either the Provincial or municipal authority
- The proposed use would involve hunting at a location that is unreasonably close to a fenced pasture in which livestock of the agricultural disposition holder are present
- The proposed use is camping
- The proposed use would be contrary to a recreational management plan

21. Please provide any comments regarding access on White Area public land.

SUPPORTING AND ENABLING STEWARDSHIP AND CONSERVATION FOR PRIVATE LANDS

(Draft Plan pages 44, 45, 74, 75)

Overview

- Alberta's farmers and ranchers have a strong tradition of land stewardship and conservation. The landscapes many Albertans value today are a result of their efforts.
- Growing population, climate change and industrial development are impacting Alberta's landscapes and the ecosystem services they provide.
- A provincial approach needs to be explored and developed to encourage a broad suite of ecosystem services by private landowners.
- The government of Alberta is committed to the exploration and facilitation of economic tools, such as financial incentives, as well as the development of market-based instruments for ecosystem services that are voluntary in nature and which provide business opportunities for private landowners.

What's Proposed

- As part of the development of both the Biodiversity Management Framework and the linear footprint management plan for the South Saskatchewan Region, key indicators related to intact native grasslands will be identified. **Voluntary conservation efforts** from the private land base will not only assist but are necessary for achieving regional goals related to native grasslands in the region. The South Saskatchewan Regional Plan will provide guidance to:
 - The Land Trust Grant Program and direct that intact native grasslands receive the highest priority and;
 - Initiatives such as the Southeast Conservation Offset Pilot and MULTISAR (voluntary species at risk conservation program).
- With almost half of the region's land area under cultivation (crops and tame pasture), the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan promotes the continued development and adoption of **beneficial management practices** that demonstrate the agriculture and agri-food sector's ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship.

Share Your Views

22. How strongly do you support or not support the proposed strategies to enable stewardship and conservation for private lands?

22a. Why do you support?

22b. Why do not you support?

23. Please provide any comments with regards to supporting and enabling stewardship and conservation for private lands. Are there additional strategies that could be used to support and enable stewardship and conservation on private lands?

MANAGING AIR QUALITY THROUGH CONTINUED COLLABORATION

(Draft Plan pages 48, 49, 75-79, Schedule A)

Overview

- Alberta has endorsed the national Air Quality Management System as a comprehensive approach for improving air quality.
- Implementation of the system in Alberta requires the continued support and maintenance of effective partnerships and collaborative approaches.
- Air quality is managed in the region based on provincial policy, legislation and regulations including ambient air quality objectives. The emphasis has been on ensuring effective regulation of point source emissions.
- A management framework for air quality will add to and complement, not replace or duplicate the existing policies, legislation, regulations and management tools. The framework:
 - Is proactive and dynamic to ensure negative trends are identified and assessed;
 - Sets regional limits which are not to be exceeded;
 - Provides management response opportunities for collaborative work with government and stakeholders in the region to find options and solutions; and
 - Will address both point and non-point sources through a combination of regulatory and non-regulatory tools.

What's Proposed

- Implement the **Air Quality Management Framework for the South Saskatchewan Region**.
 - The framework is part of a comprehensive air quality management system in the province. The ambient air quality limits and triggers in the framework are based on Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards for fine particulate matter and ground-level ozone, and Alberta Ambient Air Quality Objectives for nitrogen dioxide.

- The Government of Alberta will continue to work with local airshed groups within the South Saskatchewan Region.
- Continue to support the implementation of the **Calgary Region Airshed Zone Particulate Matter and Ozone Management Plan**.

Share Your Views

24. How strongly do you support or not support the proposed air quality management framework?

24a. Why do you support?

24b. Why do not you support?

25. Please provide any comments regarding opportunities to enhance collaboration to effectively implement the framework and management responses?

26. Please provide any comments about the proposed strategies for managing air quality.

Advancing Watershed Management

(Draft Plan pages 81-91, Appendix B, Schedule B)

Overview

- The complex relationship between the water, the land and all those that live on it has been recognized and our collective knowledge, understanding and appreciation of this complexity has grown and improved significantly over time.
- With increasing pressures and demands, we must continue to advance an integrated view across water supply, water quality and aquatic ecosystems in the region.
- To the west in the region, the eastern slopes provide the major headwaters for the region and more than 75% of the region's water supplies. Recognizing the priority for headwaters management and protection, for both water supply and water quality, is a key element of this regional plan.
- To the east and the south, southern Alberta must continue to meet its transboundary obligations for water management.
- Matching water supply and demand is a key challenge in the region.
- Compounding the challenge of matching water supply and demand in the region are other factors that will alter the amount of available water in the future, such as climatic conditions. Planning to support climate change adaptation, and ensure preparedness for drought management and flood response are all essential to ensuring the region can be resilient and adapt to changing conditions over time.
- Appropriate flood management is also essential in the region and contributes to long-term community sustainability and resiliency. Flooding of the major rivers and their tributaries in southern Alberta has resulted in large economic costs in recent decades. Major floods occurred in 1995, 2005, 2010 and most notably in 2013. Enhancements in the existing flood management system of both the Government of Alberta and municipalities can support flood management as well as making better land-use decisions in flood hazard areas.
- Significant investment in water infrastructure has been made and it is important that this investment continue to be protected so it can continue to provide a range of economic, environmental and social benefits into the future.
- The Approved Water Management Plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin continues to provide important guidance for water management in the region.
- The 2013 water conversations with Albertans will inform provincial policy on water and watersheds and will result in enhanced water management in this region.

Water Quality:

- Water quality is managed in the region based on provincial policy, legislation and regulations including ambient water quality objectives. The emphasis has been on ensuring effective regulation of point source discharges.
- A management framework for surface water quality for the main stems of the Bow, Milk, Oldman and South Saskatchewan rivers will add to and complement, not replace or duplicate the existing policies, legislation, regulations and management tools. The framework:
 - Is proactive and dynamic to ensure negative trends are identified and assessed;
 - Sets regional limits which are not to be exceeded;
 - Provides management response opportunities for collaborative work with government and stakeholders in the region to find options and solutions;
 - Will address non-point source pollution through a combination of regulatory and non-regulatory tools; and
 - Will utilize watershed planning and advisory councils and associated stewardship groups as key contributors to framework implementation.

Water Quantity:

- Groundwater quantity in some local areas is experiencing pressure especially in basins that have water allocation restrictions.

Wetlands and Riparian Areas:

- Riparian lands are highly productive, rich and resilient parts of the landscape. Programs and guidance such as "Cows and Fish", and the publication Stepping Back from the Water support voluntary approaches to riparian land management.
- Wetlands are highly diverse and complex ecosystems and provide benefits including resiliency to drought and flood conditions, water purifications, groundwater recharge, recreation and biodiversity. The Government of Alberta recently approved the Alberta Wetlands Policy which will set regional objectives and is committed to increasing knowledge and mapping of wetlands.

What's Proposed

- Implement the **Surface Quality Management Framework for the South Saskatchewan Region**.
 - Surface water quality limits in the framework are based on provincially-used water quality guidelines. They were chosen to protect the most sensitive water use such as agriculture, industrial, recreational and aesthetics, drinking water and protection of aquatic life. Limits and triggers have been set for fifteen general water quality indicators. Two metal and four pesticides have been selected as secondary indicators to be monitored.
 - Taking action to manage surface water quality will involve the provincial government and a number of parties including the agricultural sector, municipalities, partnership groups and others.
 - A Phosphorus Management Plan for the Bow River has been initiated as a proactive management response to elevated phosphorus levels in the river. It is a multi-stakeholder collaborative project to address point and non-point source phosphorus inputs. It is a part of the surface water quality management framework and completed by the end of 2013.
- Develop a comprehensive approach for **groundwater management** which will include an enhanced regional monitoring strategy by the end of 2014 and continued groundwater mapping.
- Continue to support the work of the **watershed planning and advisory councils on watershed assessment and planning** in alignment with regional planning.
- Continue to work with landowners and stakeholders to increase knowledge and **improve management of wetland areas and riparian areas within the region**.
- Encourage the use of beneficial management practices for large scale land disturbances to **minimize sedimentation of waterways**.
- Encourage the development of **source water protection plans and the use of source water protection measures**.
- Continue to require the development of **drinking water safety plans** for all municipal waterworks systems.
- Encourage decision-makers and land managers to use **available planning information**.
- Continue to develop an **optimized water management infrastructure system** in the region and complete a water storage opportunities study for the South Saskatchewan Region by the end of 2015.
- Continue to work towards the **Water For Life** outcome for overall water efficiency and **productivity in Alberta improves by 30 per cent** from 2005 levels by 2015.
- Continue to develop approaches to address **climate variability** found in the region including supporting flood management planning and preparedness through updated flood hazard mapping, establishing limitations for new development in flood hazard areas, and supporting development of municipal flood hazard mitigation plans.
- **Headwaters protection** (see Conservation Areas)
- Continue **collaboration with watershed planning and advisory councils on water related objectives and implementation plans**.
- Review existing **water conservation objectives for headwaters tributaries** in support of the Approved Water Management Plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin.

27. How strongly do support or not support the proposed surface water quality management framework?

Somewhat Support

27a. Why do you support?

Most Albertans, including motorized users, enjoy our back country because the rivers are clean, there are fish in the waters, and animals in the forests. We genuinely value our back country, and wish to preserve it, and request that the SSRP include a new management framework to ensure that these natural areas are preserved for all Albertans. The SSRP needs to include more advanced management tools, such as those that have been used by the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org/>) to successfully manage recreation on public land. A 5 E's management framework: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation will meet the goals both of conservation and Motorized Offroad Recreation.

27b. Why do not you support?

The current SSRP's reliance on existing access management practices leads to the elimination of Motorized Offroad Recreation from some of Alberta's iconic areas, virtually removes the ability of handicapped Albertans from enjoying those same areas, and prohibits many world-class tourism

opportunities. The SSRP needs to include allowance for the creation, expansion and maintenance of Motorized Offroad Trails based on the principles of 5 E's: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation. The SSRP also needs to include the Government of Alberta's commitment to support and enhance Motorized Offroad Recreation Trail growth and sustainability based on a proven successful approach such as that of the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org>).

28. How strongly do you support or not support the proposed suite of strategies for managing watersheds (quality, quantity, etc)?

Somewhat Support

28a. Why do you support?

Most Albertans, including motorized users, enjoy our back country because the rivers are clean, there are fish in the waters, and animals in the forests. We genuinely value our back country, and wish to preserve it, and request that the SSRP include a new management framework to ensure that these natural areas are preserved for all Albertans. The SSRP needs to include more advanced management tools, such as those that have been used by the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org>) to successfully manage recreation on public land. A 5 E's management framework: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation will meet the goals both of conservation and Motorized Offroad Recreation.

28b. Why do not you support?

The current SSRP's reliance on existing access management practices leads to the elimination of Motorized Offroad Recreation from some of Alberta's iconic areas, virtually removes the ability of handicapped Albertans from enjoying those same areas, and prohibits many world-class tourism opportunities. The SSRP needs to include allowance for the creation, expansion and maintenance of Motorized Offroad Trails based on the principles of 5 E's: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation. The SSRP also needs to include the Government of Alberta's commitment to support and enhance Motorized Offroad Recreation Trail growth and sustainability based on a proven successful approach such as that of the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org>).

29. Please provide any comments about the proposed suite of strategies for managing watersheds (quality, quantity, etc).

The SSRP needs to include an outline for the development of a Motorized Offroad Recreation Management Plan for each zone based on the 5 E's Management Framework. Specifically, these 5 E's are: Experience – Master Trail Planning which incorporates ecological, social and trail sustainability while providing the Experience Albertan's desire; Engineering – Budget and Implementation capability to create sustainable trails, not just re-use unsustainable existing linear disturbances; Education – to ensure users know what to expect, what to do, and their responsibilities on the trails; Enforcement – to ensure compliance with the plan; Evaluation – to continuously improve the plan. Motorized Offroad Recreation Trails can and should exist in Alberta, and can be compatible with conservation.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

(Draft Plan pages 49-51, 91-99)



Overview

- Land-use planning is both a municipal and provincial activity. A high-level of collaboration, coordination and integration is important to achieving the regional outcomes for air, land, water and biodiversity.

Municipal decisions in the region should aim to:

- Make efficient use of land, infrastructure, public services and public facilities to establish land-use patterns that influence human activity, facilitate health and well-being, and promote social interaction and inclusion;
- Promote resource conservation;
- Protect, enhance and promote the historic and cultural integrity of an area;
- Enhance economic development activities;
- Minimize environmental impacts on land, air and water;
- Protect significant natural environments;
- Contribute to the development of health, safe and viable communities; and
- Contribute to a safe, efficient and cost-effective provincial transportation network.
- The cumulative footprint of communities will continue to grow to accommodate population increases as well as economic growth. Foresight, creative and good planning will be required to minimize the impacts of land-use on the environment and reducing the extent of the built environment, while utilizing our energy and natural resources wisely.
- The updated Provincial Land-Use Policies (section 622 of the *Municipal Government Act*) have been drafted into the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan. These policies provide broad direction to municipalities.
- The government is preparing legislative changes to ensure developments are no longer approved in floodways.

What's Proposed

- With regards to Water and Watersheds,
 - Municipalities will:
 - Utilize or incorporate measures which minimize or mitigate possible negative impacts on important water resources or risks to health, safety and loss to property damage due to hazards associated with water, such as flooding, erosion and subsidence due to bank stability issues, etc., within the scope of their jurisdiction.
 - Incorporate measures in land-use decisions to mitigate the impacts of floods through appropriate flood hazard area management, emergency response planning for floods and appropriate development in the flood hazard area in accordance with provincial policy on development within flood hazard areas.
 - Municipalities will be encouraged to:
 - Assess existing developments located with flood hazard areas for long-term opportunities for re-development to reduce risk associated with flooding including human safety, property damage, infrastructure and economic loss.

Share Your Views**30. How strongly do you support or not support the proposed change to the provincial land use policy guiding water and watersheds?**

Somewhat Support

30a. Why do you support?

Most Albertans, including motorized users, enjoy our back country because the rivers are clean, there are fish in the waters, and animals in the forests. We genuinely value our back country, and wish to preserve it, and request that the SSRP include a new management framework to ensure that these natural areas are preserved for all Albertans. The SSRP needs to include more advanced management tools, such as those that have been used by the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org/>) to successfully manage recreation on public land. A 5 E's management framework: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation will meet the goals both of conservation and Motorized Offroad Recreation.

30b. Why do not you support?

The current SSRP's reliance on existing access management practices leads to the elimination of Motorized Offroad Recreation from some of Alberta's iconic areas, virtually removes the ability of handicapped Albertans from enjoying those same areas, and prohibits many world-class tourism opportunities. The SSRP needs to include allowance for the creation, expansion and maintenance of Motorized Offroad Trails based on the principles of 5 E's: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation. The SSRP also needs to include the Government of Alberta's commitment to support and enhance Motorized Offroad Recreation Trail growth and sustainability based on a proven successful approach such as that of the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org/>).

31. Please provide any comments about the proposed strengthening communities' strategies.

The SSRP needs to include an outline for the development of a Motorized Offroad Recreation Management Plan for each zone based on the 5 E's Management Framework. Specifically, these 5 E's are: Experience – Master Trail Planning which incorporates ecological, social and trail sustainability while providing the Experience Albertan's desire; Engineering – Budget and Implementation capability to create sustainable trails, not just re-use unsustainable existing linear disturbances; Education – to ensure users know what to expect, what to do, and their responsibilities on the trails; Enforcement – to ensure compliance with the plan; Evaluation – to continuously improve the plan. Motorized Offroad Recreation Trails can and should exist in Alberta, and can be compatible with conservation.

ENHANCING RECREATION AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

(Draft Plan pages 51-56, 96-99, Appendices D, E, G, I and J)

**Overview**

- Areas on Crown land have been identified that provide diverse, safe, sustainable and enjoyable outdoor recreation opportunities that contribute to healthy lifestyles and a diversity of recreational opportunities. These areas consist of a combination of physical, biological, cultural, constructed and/or geographical opportunities that can provide recreation and tourism opportunities.
- Recreational opportunities are important for residents and visitors and provide areas for people to visit, play and enjoy the natural beauty of Alberta. Providing access to nature is essential for the physical and emotional health of children and adults and nature-based recreation activities promote the appreciation of natural and cultural features.
- Continued formalization of motorized and non-motorized trails with improvement to existing trails and development where needed will occur collaboratively.
- To meet growing demands, the focus over the next few decades will be on managing existing recreational areas and access management. Additional camping opportunities will be developed and key recreational areas will be enhanced through facilities re-investment.
- Future access and camping management will be determined through trail mapping, and through

recreation and access management planning and linear footprint management planning with consultation. Priority areas are the area north of Castle, Livingstone, Porcupine Hills and Willow Creek (as described in the draft regional plan). The Government of Alberta will work collaboratively with stakeholders and trail associations to determine the appropriate trail network.

- These plans will guide recreation and tourism development and management on public land and will provide the opportunity to expand outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism opportunities.
- The SSRP will not eliminate random camping, rather the intent is to better manage the land where random camping is occurring by providing new areas to camp and a designated trail system.
- New Public Land Recreation Areas (low infrastructure camping areas) will be established in conjunction with other strategies for enhancing recreation and tourism opportunities. These sites will be located in highly popular areas of random camping on public lands. They will be developed to include basic amenities such as fire rings and gravel pad and no fees will be charged.
- There will be collaborative outreach and education programs to promote responsible land use and shared stewardship. This will include an "on the ground" program with seasonal outreach staff.
- Expanded Public Land Use Zones will be established after trails are identified through mapping and posting of signs.
- As recreation and access management plans, the linear footprint management plan and the Regional Trail Systems Plan are completed, the Public Land Use Zones Schedule(s) will be updated as part of implementation of these plans.
- Refer to Eastern Slopes - Green Area Public Land section for information specific to proposed changes to the Public Land Use Zones in the Green Area

What's Proposed

- Manage **recreation and tourism opportunities** to ensure quality outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism experiences while minimizing environmental impacts.
- Continue to maintain locally, regionally and provincially significant recreation and tourism features, including sites, areas and corridors.
- Address **flood (2013) damaged** recreation and parks areas.
- Invest in existing parks facilities to enhance the experiences of users.
- Expand and designate **new provincial parks and provincial recreation areas** to provide recreational opportunities, contribute to tourism growth and begin to address growing recreational demand in the region. (See Schedule C - SSRP Land Uses and Schedule D - SSRP Digital Map).
 - These parks will provide opportunities for outdoor nature-based recreation, tourism, and education, which are dependent on and compatible with the conservation objective that may be present on a specific site.
 - Some of the recreational activities that will be provided include serviced and un-serviced campgrounds, day-use areas, motorized and non-motorized staging areas and trails and tourism opportunities.
- Create **new Public Land Recreation Areas** in the eastern slopes to provide managed random camping areas. (See Schedule C - SSRP Land Uses and Schedule D - SSRP Digital Map).
- Through the recreation and access management planning process additional Public Land Recreation Areas may be identified and established.
- Ensure all sites within the **provincial parks system** within the region are appropriately **classed and consolidated** areas to gain efficiencies in management approach.
- Continue to provide **outreach, education and enforcement** throughout the eastern slopes to promote stewardship.
- Work with aboriginal and other communities, stakeholders and partners to develop **comprehensive and integrated recreation and access management plans** for lands in the Green Area. Namely, the Castle, Porcupine Hills, Livingstone and Willow Creek areas by the end of 2017.
- Support current and future projects to identify, maintain and enhance sustainable long-term public **access to recreational water bodies**.
- In collaboration with aboriginal and other communities, stakeholders and partners, develop the **South Saskatchewan Regional Trail System Plan** to provide designated land and water trails for year-round recreation linking communities, parks and outdoor spaces.
- Develop the **regional parks plan for the South Saskatchewan Region** to direct the planning and management of new and existing parks within the provincial parks system by the end of 2016. This plan will reflect the conservation, recreation and tourism values, growing demands and changing expectations of visitors.
- Explore **legislative tool options** to help address liability concerns and facilitate continued work with trail groups and stewards in planning and managing trails.
- In concert with developers, ensure that land-based development activities are assessed to **identify and protect historic resources**.
- Ensure continued **public accessibility to information regarding historic resources** in the region.
- **Identify and designate important historic resources** in the region with municipal partners.
- Work with and support Parks Canada to inscribe **Writing-on-Stone as a World Heritage site**.

Share Your Views

32. How strongly do you support or not support the suite of proposed strategies for enhancing recreation and cultural opportunities for Albertans in the SSRP as described above?

[Somewhat Support](#)

33. How strongly do you support or not support the following new or expanded parks areas?

Map	Name of Park	Status	
1	West Bragg Creek Provincial Park	Expansion	: Do Not Support
2	Gooseberry Provincial Park	Expansion	: Do Not Support
3	Elbow River Provincial Park	Expansion	: Do Not Support
4	Elbow Falls Provincial Park	Expansion	: Do Not Support
5	Little Elbow Provincial Park	Expansion	: Do Not Support
6	Sheep River Provincial Park	Expansion	: Do Not Support
7	Chinook Provincial Park	Expansion	: Do Not Support
8	Syncline Provincial Park	Expansion	: Do Not Support
9	Cypress Hills Provincial Park	Expansion	: Do Not Support
10	Sibbald Lake Provincial Recreation Area	Expansion	: Do Not Support
11	Crowsnest Lake Provincial Recreation Area	New	: Do Not Support
12	Coleman Provincial Recreation Area	New	: Do Not Support

- 33a. Why do you support?

Most Albertans, including motorized users, enjoy our back country because the rivers are clean, there are fish in the waters, and animals in the forests. We genuinely value our back country, and wish to preserve it, and request that the SSRP include a new management framework to ensure that these natural areas are preserved for all Albertans. The SSRP needs to include more advanced management tools, such as those that have been used by the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org/>) to successfully manage recreation on public land. A 5 E's management framework: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation will meet the goals both of conservation and Motorized Offroad Recreation.

- 33b. Why do not you support?

The current SSRP's reliance on existing access management practices leads to the elimination of Motorized Offroad Recreation from some of Alberta's iconic areas, virtually removes the ability of handicapped Albertans from enjoying those same areas, and prohibits many world-class tourism opportunities. The SSRP needs to include allowance for the creation, expansion and maintenance of Motorized Offroad Trails based on the principles of 5 E's: Experience, Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Evaluation. The SSRP also needs to include the Government of Alberta's commitment to support and enhance Motorized Offroad Recreation Trail growth and sustainability based on a proven successful approach such as that of the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC <http://nohvcc.org/>).

34. Please provide any additional comments about the proposed enhancement of recreation and cultural opportunities in the SSRP.

Recreational Trails need not be incompatible with conservation. While it may have been in the past using the Access Management Plans to manage motorized recreation, it does not have to when using the 5E's Management Framework. There are several examples where recreation, including motorized recreation on sustainable trails is managed in sensitive conservation areas. For Example, The US National Parks Service allows four wheel drive vehicles to use trails in several National Parks, including Canyonlands Park in Utah, and Death Valley in California. These parks utilize the 5E's to sustainably manage motorized recreation in a conservation area.

35. In addition to the provincial parks and recreation areas the plan establishes new Public Lands Recreation Areas as shown on the maps on pages 53, 54 and 157. Are there additional areas where over time you would like to see infrastructure improvements developed to support random camping?

ENSURING ABORIGINAL PEOPLES ARE INCLUDED IN LAND-USE PLANNING



(Draft Plan pages 56, 100, 101)

Overview

- First Nations have a long relationship with the region. Traditional alliances provide meaningful opportunities for aboriginal peoples to continue their ways of life. Ongoing consultation, engagement and relationship building and establishing innovative outreach programs that are meaningful, relevant and sensitive to First Nation's culture are important.
- In accordance with applicable government policy, the Government of Alberta will continue to consult

with aboriginal peoples in a meaningful way when Government decisions may adversely affect the continued exercise of their constitutionally protected rights and the input from these consultations continues to be considered prior to the decision.

Share Your Views

36. How strongly do you support or not support each of the proposed strategies in the draft plan?

Explore and present potential new approaches to draw on the rich cultural, ecological and historical knowledge and stewardship practices of aboriginal communities. :

Establish a South Saskatchewan Regional Land Sub-table with First Nations with an interest in the region. :

Continue First Nation involvement in watershed management planning initiatives. :

Engage Aboriginal people on initiatives to support tourism development. :

Promoting the economic, social and cultural well-being of aboriginal communities. :

37. Please share any additional comments regarding the proposed strategies for ensuring aboriginal peoples are included in land-use planning.

38. Please share any additional comments you may have regarding the draft South Saskatchewan Regional Plan.

39. Where is your primary residence?

40. What are the first three digits of your postal code?

41. Do you participate in recreation and tourism experiences in the South Saskatchewan Region?

42. Do you currently work within the South Saskatchewan Region?

43. Are you employed by or associated with any of the following?

Public Sector (federal/provincial/municipal government) : No

Industry (energy,forestry,agriculture,tourism and others) : No

Non-government organizations : No

An aboriginal community : No

Other : No

44. Which age group do you belong?

45. Would you like to be added to the LUF mailing list? If so, please enter your email address below. Your email address will not be used to identify your responses to any of the workbook questions.

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