

# Fixing the draft South Saskatchewan Regional Plan

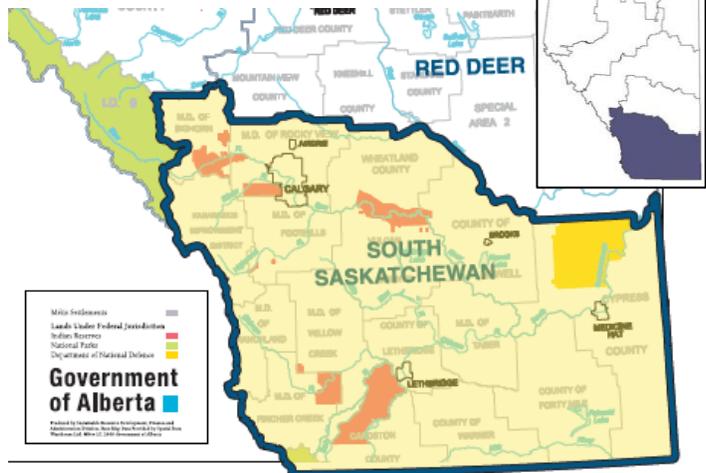
## General Comments

### Protecting Alberta's Headwaters and Clean Water

The SSRP contains vague language about prioritizing headwaters integrity, but fails to walk the talk by providing specific changes and standards. The draft SSRP allows obsolete practices such as clear-cut logging to continue.

#### What should be in the plan?

- Areas already impacted by clear-cut logging and road building must be restored as soon as possible.
- Practices for achieving natural, healthy water systems and wildlife habitat needs to be defined in forest management.
- Protected areas outlined in the SSRP should include more than just the mountaintops above timberline. Protected areas should also include the slopes and valleys through which the streams and rivers flow.



### Protecting the Castle and Creating New Wildland Parks

Virtually all of the “new” protected areas in the plan are already protected by policy; thus very little additional protection is included in the plan. Almost all of the new protected areas are mountaintops and do not include ecologically important lower elevations.

#### What should be in the plan?

- A Wildland Provincial Park for the entire 1,040 km<sup>2</sup> of the Castle Special Place.
- Protected areas should conserve ecologically important habitat from “top-to-bottom,” not just the harsh, windswept areas above timberline.
- New protected areas should be put in place in the Ghost watershed, Kananaskis country, the Porcupine Hills, the Milk River watershed, the Livingstone Range and the Castle Special Place.
- The Pekisko Heritage Rangeland is a positive step for grasslands protection; however additional new protected areas in the grasslands are needed to support our ranching culture and protect species-at-risk such as the sage grouse.



### Conserving Wildlife Habitat and Prime Recreation

#### 1) Connecting Habitat

Expert biologists warn us that it's not enough to protect isolated patches of wildlife habitat. To survive over the long term, wildlife need to be able to move in between those protected habitats. None of the designated protected areas are connected in any way.

### ***What should be in the plan?***

- The plan needs a new land use designation, which identifies and protects habitat for wildlife between protected areas, especially along stream and river corridors.

### **2) Roads and Trails**

We all use roads and trails to access the backcountry, but people and wildlife alike also need big, wild and quiet spaces entirely apart from noise and pollution that comes with motor traffic. When this balance is tipped, motorized traffic and crowds on off-road vehicles lead to degraded streams and dirty water, disrupted water runoff patterns, conflicts between people and loss of key wildlife habitats. This is already too common in the region.



Land managers have already developed scientific standards for roads and trails in grizzly bear and cutthroat trout habitat. There is no reason to wait for putting those standards into effect.

### ***What should be in the plan?***

- Immediate development and implementation of the Linear Footprint Management Plan.

### **3) Recreation Management and Tourism**

The tourism and recreation development strategies in the draft SSRP focus largely on promoting motorized recreation. This plan fails to give proper weight to eco-tourism potential of the region and the real reasons people come to visit our beautiful Alberta wilderness.

In order to encourage responsible recreation, the plan needs to make the hard trade-offs to reduce land-use conflicts.

### ***What should be in the plan?***

- Specific measures to develop the eco-tourism potential of the region.
- Reclaim damaged terrain and keep OHV riders on specific trails built for the purpose.
- Regulate random camping outside of Public Land Recreation Areas to limit damage to land and water.
- Sufficient resources to enforce the prohibition of uses outside of designated trails or areas.

### **What can you do?**

**Contact your MLA and Premier Alison Redford** at to let them know what you think about the draft SSRP. Call Premier Redford 310-0000 email: [premier@gov.ab.ca](mailto:premier@gov.ab.ca)

**Attend a public consultation** session in November. Go to [www.landuse.alberta.ca](http://www.landuse.alberta.ca) for a list of sessions.

**Social Media.** Post a comment on the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development blog and on Twitter @aenv\_srd. #SSRP #Alberta #Environment #Sustainable Resource #Development