

# Interim Protection Measures

Parks and Protected Areas  
in Bighorn Country



Alberta Environment and Parks, Government of Alberta  
November, 23 2018

Interim Protection Measures –Parks and Protected Areas in Bighorn Country

AEP Public Land Management 2018 No. 8  
Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP)  
Information Centre  
Toll Free: 1 877 944-0313  
Email: [AEP.Info-Centre@gov.ab.ca](mailto:AEP.Info-Centre@gov.ab.ca)

Alberta Energy Regulator (AER)  
Customer Contact Centre  
Toll Free: 1 855 297-8311  
Email: [inquiries@aer.ca](mailto:inquiries@aer.ca)

For more information regarding this content visit: [AEP Talk Bighorn Country  
Public Lands Dispositions](#)

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## Purpose

The intent of this document is to provide clarity and guidance to surface disposition applicants and staff responsible for authorizing land use activities in the Government of Alberta and the Alberta Energy Regulator. The information applies to proposed parks and protected areas in Bighorn Country. Proposed public land use zones are not affected.

## Background

Alberta Environment and Parks is proposing the establishment or amendment and designation of parks and protected areas under the *Provincial Parks Act* within Bighorn Country. Bighorn Country includes all public lands within the western part of the North Saskatchewan Region, from the boundary of Banff National Park, eastward towards Drayton Valley, and includes Clearwater County, and most of Brazeau County.

- Wildland Provincial Parks and Provincial Parks support biodiversity and provision of critical ecological services. They protect rare or sensitive habitats, support wildlife populations and maintain ecological systems and processes. Some activities may not be compatible with the management intent of the proposed protected areas. Criteria used to identify and evaluate potential wildland provincial parks and provincial parks include:
  - Areas that are representative of the biological diversity of the region;
  - Areas of sufficient size that provide landscape connectivity;

- Areas with little or no industrial activity;
- Areas that support Indigenous traditional use; and,
- Areas currently managed with a conservation intent.
- Provincial Recreation Areas support the health and wellness of Albertans – today and for years to come. They provide appropriate settings and facilities to experience nature and support local economies by leveraging tourism potential. Additionally, provincial recreation areas foster appreciation for our natural and cultural resources, which can contribute to management success. Criteria used to identify and evaluate potential provincial recreation areas include:
  - Focusing on opportunities to enhance recreational opportunities within or adjacent to existing recreation areas;
  - Prioritizing recreational opportunities that have high recreation or tourism value; and,
  - Assessing future demand and identifying areas that have the capacity to meet this demand.

## Policy Context

Due to the sensitive nature of the proposed parks and protected areas identified in Bighorn Country, interim protection measures are applied to ensure these areas are not impacted through energy, forestry and other industrial activities that are inconsistent with conservation or recreation management intent.

To notify and guide surface disposition applicants, and Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP), Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, and Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) staff, Protective Notations (PNTs) are applied on proposed conservation and recreation areas. This notifies Alberta Energy to pause on tenure sales within these areas.

Applying PNTs and pausing tenure sales on proposed conservation and recreation areas reduces the risk of compensation should the areas become approved. These measures maintain environmental and cultural integrity of the eight proposed parks and protected areas in Bighorn Country. Protection measures will be updated as needed or removed if these areas are formally designated under the relevant Parks legislation.

## Direction to AEP and AER Staff

The AER receives applications and manages land use activities for upstream oil, gas, oil sands and coal in the province. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry manages forestry activities. AEP receives applications and manages other industrial/commercial/agricultural activities.

This document serves to guide decision-makers in AEP, Agriculture and Forestry, and the AER for land use activities in areas that are being considered as potential parks and protected areas in Bighorn Country.

The following guidance will apply to areas placed under PNT for the purposes of parks and protected areas planning which include areas that are candidate for designation as a Wildland Provincial Park, Provincial Park, or Provincial Recreation Area. Maps and shape files of the proposed conservation and recreation areas are found at on Alberta TalkAEP website at the following link <https://talkaep.alberta.ca/bighorn-country>.

For areas proposed as a **Wildland Provincial Park**, the following restrictions apply:

- All subsurface Crown mineral rights have been temporarily reserved from disposition in the area until the proposed Wildland Provincial Park is finalized by the Government of Alberta.
- No surface applications related to existing coal, metallic and industrial minerals, or oil sands tenure will be considered.
- Surface access for existing petroleum and natural gas tenure in place as of November 23, 2018 will be considered in accordance with existing requirements, but surface disturbance is to be minimized.
- No new sand and gravel applications for Surface Materials Leases (SMLs), Surface Material Licences (SMCs) and Surface Material Exploration (SMEs). Existing SMLs, SMCs, and SMEs as of November 23, 2018 will be honoured.
- Forestry - Annual Operating Plan submissions that have been approved prior to November 23, 2018 will proceed at the discretion of the Forestry Manager. Annual Operating Plan submissions received after November 23, 2018 should be put on hold pending approval and legal designation of the proposed Wildland Provincial Park.
- Applicants wishing to submit a new application for a public lands disposition or an application to renew or amend an existing public lands dispositions in this area shall contact Land and Park Planners via email for more information at [AEP.PlanningReservations@gov.ab.ca](mailto:AEP.PlanningReservations@gov.ab.ca).



For areas proposed as a **Provincial Park** the following restrictions apply:

- All subsurface Crown mineral rights have been temporarily reserved from disposition in the area until the proposed Provincial Park is finalized by the Government of Alberta.
- No surface applications related to existing coal, metallic and industrial minerals, or oil sands tenure will be considered.
- Surface access for existing petroleum and natural gas tenure in place as of November 23, 2018 will be considered in accordance with existing requirements, but surface disturbance is to be minimized.
- No new sand and gravel applications for Surface Materials Leases (SMLs), Surface Material Licences (SMCs) and Surface Material Exploration (SMEs). Existing SMLs, SMCs, and SMEs as of November 23, 2018 will be honoured.
- Forestry - Annual Operating Plan submissions that have been approved prior to November 23, 2018 will proceed at the discretion of the Forestry Manager. Annual Operating Plan submissions received after November 23, 2018 should be put on hold pending approval and legal designation of the proposed Provincial Park.
- Applicants wishing to submit a new application for a public lands disposition or an application to renew or amend an existing public lands dispositions in this area shall contact Land and Park Planners via email for more information at [AEP.PlanningReservations@gov.ab.ca](mailto:AEP.PlanningReservations@gov.ab.ca).

For areas proposed as a **Provincial Recreation Area** the following restrictions apply:

- All subsurface Crown mineral rights have been temporarily reserved from disposition in the area until the proposed Provincial Recreation Area is finalized by the Government of Alberta.
- No surface applications related to existing coal, metallic and industrial minerals, or oil sands tenure will be considered.
- Surface access for existing petroleum and natural gas tenure in place as of November 23, 2018 will be considered in accordance with existing requirements, but surface disturbance is to be minimized.
- No new sand and gravel applications for Surface Materials Leases (SMLs), Surface Materials Licences (SMCs) and Surface Material Exploration (SMEs). Existing SMLs, SMCs, and SMEs as of November 23, 2018 will be honoured.
- Forestry - Annual Operating Plan submissions that have been approved prior to November 23, 2018 will proceed at the discretion of the Forestry Manager. Annual Operating Plan submissions received after November 23, 2018 should be put on hold pending approval and legal designation of the proposed Provincial Recreation Area.

- Applicants wishing to submit a new application for a public lands disposition or an application to renew or amend an existing public lands dispositions in this area shall contact Land and Park Planners via email for more information at [AEP.PlanningReservations@gov.ab.ca](mailto:AEP.PlanningReservations@gov.ab.ca).

## Authorities

The following roles are responsible for maintaining, approving and using this administrative procedure:

- Administrative Procedure Owner: AEP Parks Land Management Branch
- Administrative Procedure Approver: AEP ADM Parks Division
- Administrative Procedure Users: AEP Operations Division, Agriculture and Forestry - Forestry Division, and the Alberta Energy Regulator

Original signed by: \_\_\_\_\_,

Date: November 23, 2018

Scott Jones  
Executive Director of Program Coordination, Parks Division  
Alberta Environment and Parks