

**July 24, 2001**  
**Edmonton**

Alberta Government strengthens protection of Kananaskis Country

Today, two Government of Alberta departments jointly announced plans to extend further protection of Kananaskis Country.

Alberta Community Development designated the new Sheep River Provincial Park, Bluerock Wildland Provincial Park and Don Getty Wildland Provincial Park as the latest sites to be protected under the Special Places program. Alberta Sustainable Resource Development announced that it will convert Spray Lake Sawmills' timber quotas into a Forest Management Agreement (FMA) to allow for better management of its harvest areas. No new harvest areas are being added to the FMA.

"Kananaskis Country is the jewel in Alberta's crown and the three new designations demonstrate the Alberta government's commitment to protecting our natural landscapes while providing outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism, under the Special Places program," said Gene Zwozdesky, Community Development Minister. "Kananaskis Country has benefited from some of the most comprehensive and modern land use planning and public consultation in Alberta. We have listened to Albertans and this has resulted in the establishment of 13 parks and protected areas in Kananaskis Country over the past 25 years."

"Converting the timber quotas to a Forest Management Agreement (FMA) benefits the province and our environment," added Mike Cardinal, Minister of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development. "No new harvest areas are being added to the region. Within Kananaskis Country, this FMA falls only within the Multiple Use areas, where resource development activity such as timber harvesting is allowed. Public input is a significant component of the detailed forest management planning process for the FMA."

"This FMA was negotiated in the best interests for Albertans and will continue to honour the existing Integrated Resource Plan for the area," concluded Cardinal.

"The wilderness setting of the wildland provincial parks will significantly contribute to recreational opportunities, while at the same time, protecting some of the most spectacular alpine landscapes and wildlife habitat," stated Janis Tarchuk, MLA for Banff-Cochrane.

The FMA gives the company more certainty about its operating environment, allows Spray Lake Sawmills to take a more planned approach to its harvest sequence, and requires the company to consult Albertans during the drafting of its detailed forest management plan.

Explained Minister Cardinal, "Spray Lake Sawmills has been operating for over 40 years in this region. We are confident the company will continue its history of environmental stewardship and continue to work with Albertans on the responsible management of our forest resource."

The newly designated sites in Kananaskis Country add approximately 817 km<sup>2</sup> (81,686.19 ha). The new Sheep River Provincial Park is approximately 62 km<sup>2</sup> (6,191.60 ha) and Bluerock Wildland Provincial Park is about 127 km<sup>2</sup> (12,719.59 ha). The Don Getty Wildland Provincial Park is 628 km<sup>2</sup> (62,775 ha).

The Special Places program officially began in March 1995. Since that time, 81 new and 13 expanded protected areas have added almost 2 million hectares to the province's parks and protected areas network. Approximately 12.5 percent of the province's land base is now legislatively protected.

For more information about Alberta's Special Places program, please visit:  
<http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/preserving/parks/index.asp>, and click on "Alberta Special Places".

**For more information about Spray Lake Sawmill's Forest Management Agreement, please visit**

<http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/forests/fmd/spray/>.

**Contact:**

Kathy Telfer - Communications Director, Alberta Community Development - Tel: (780) 427-2395

Donna Babchishin - Communications Director, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development - Tel: (780) 427- 8636

Gord Lehn - Woodlands Manager, Spray Lake Sawmills - Tel.(403) 932-2234

---

**Kananaskis Country Special Places  
Spray Lake Sawmills Forest Management Agreement  
Backgrounder**

- Since 1997, the Alberta Government and Spray Lake Sawmills have been negotiating to convert the company's existing timber quotas within Kananaskis Country to a Forest Management Agreement (FMA). On July 24, 2001, the Alberta Government agreed to convert the company's timber quotas into an FMA.
- At the same time, Alberta Community Development announced three new protected areas within Kananaskis Country - Sheep River Provincial Park, Blue Rock Wildland Provincial Park and Don Getty Wildland Provincial Park. These new protected areas - mostly within Kananaskis Country - add 817.75 km<sup>2</sup> (81,775 ha) of protected area.
- This is a "win-win" announcement. The Alberta Government has taken measures to further safeguard one of Alberta's most protected areas, while at the same time, continuing to diversify Alberta's forest industry and the provincial economy.
- This announcement is good news for Alberta on two fronts - environmental and economic.
- Kananaskis Country is managed using a multiple-use concept that supports a wide variety of activities such as camping, fishing, hiking and cross-country skiing, grazing, world-class golf courses, five-star hotels and resource development. The 1986 *Kananaskis Country Sub-Regional Integrated Resource Plan (IRP)*, 1999 *Kananaskis Country Recreation Policy* and other policies provide direction for the management of these activities and resources.

**Timber Harvesting in Kananaskis Country**

- Spray Lake Sawmills has been operating in Kananaskis Country for over 40 years. It holds several coniferous timber quotas and would like to have a more secure timber supply arrangement than is provided in a quota.

- Within Kananaskis Country, this FMA is only found in the multiple use areas, where resource development activities such as timber harvesting are allowed. No new harvest areas are being added.
- The FMA will ensure that Spray Lake Sawmills continues to operate in accordance with its history of environmental stewardship, and requires the company to conduct significant public consultation as part of its Detailed Forest Management Planning process. The company's previous timber quotas had no such requirements.
- FMAs give companies greater certainty about their long-term wood supply and allows them to take more of a planned approach to their harvest sequence.

## **Special Places in Kananaskis Country**

- The newly designated sites - most of which are in Kananaskis Country - add more than 817 km<sup>2</sup> (81,686.19 ha). The new Sheep River Provincial Park is approximately 62 km<sup>2</sup> (6,191.60 ha) and Bluerock Wildland Provincial Park is about 127 km<sup>2</sup> (12,719.59 ha). The Don Getty Wildland Provincial Park is 628 km<sup>2</sup> (62,775 ha).
- The Sheep River Provincial Park and Bluerock Wildland Provincial Park add about 189 km<sup>2</sup> (18,911.19 ha) of land to Alberta's parks and protected areas network. The two protected areas are located in the Sheep River valley of Kananaskis Country, located west of Turner Valley on Highway 546.
- Sheep River Provincial Park incorporates the entire Sheep River Wildlife Sanctuary, Sheep River Falls, Indian Oils, Bighorn Lookout and Missing Link provincial recreation areas (PRAs), as well as the adjacent Bluerock, Gorge Creek, Sandy McNabb and Long Prairie PRAs.
- Bluerock Wildland Provincial Park surrounds Sheep River Provincial Park and connects to the existing Elbow-Sheep Wildland Park. As well, it includes the outlying Threepoint and Volcano Ridge PRAs in the north
- These protected areas will provide important winter and summer habitat, as well as major movement corridors between the Foothills and Rocky Mountains, for species such as bighorn sheep, elk, moose, deer, wolves, cougars, grizzly bears and black bears. Sheep River Provincial Park contains prime bighorn sheep and cougar winter habitat. The Death Valley area supports high moose populations.
- The Don Getty Wildland Provincial Park at 627.75 km<sup>2</sup> (63,199 ha) consists of a number of parcels of land that add ecological integrity and contiguity to adjacent protected areas. The new site includes the Prime Protection Zone lands in Kananaskis Country, the northern portion of the Livingstone River drainage to the south and the Ghost and Waiparous areas to the north.
- Forget-Me-Not Ridge, within Don Getty Wildland Provincial Park, is particularly noteworthy. This site has one of the deepest known caves in Alberta as well as exceptional examples of felsenmeer, stone stripes and stone polygons. The Plateau-Cataract area includes Cataract Creek, a premier, blue ribbon, walk-in trout fishing stream. These periglacial features are well preserved with little disturbance from industrial activities and recreation use.

## Kananaskis Country

- Kananaskis Country is a 4,000 km<sup>2</sup> multiple use area located in the foothills and mountains of the Canadian Rockies with a diverse landscape including outstanding parks and a wide range of natural resources providing opportunities for recreational, social, cultural and economic benefits.
  - Parts of Kananaskis emphasize the protecting watershed, terrain, and wildlife habitat. Other areas emphasize maintaining its wildland character and backcountry experiences, while other areas provide varying levels of recreational pursuits. Other areas allow for the management and development of natural resources, such as timber, grazing, oil and gas and more intensive recreation. Resource development activity such as timber harvesting occurs in the eastern third of Kananaskis Country, where the land is zoned for multiple use.
  - Integrated resource planning provides a foundation for land and resource decisions involving public lands and resource allocation throughout the province. Its objective is to balance resource development, conservation and protection, and the maintenance of public lands and resources.
- 

Alberta Index | Dept Index | Community Development Home Page | News Releases [Top of Page](#)

---

Comments regarding presentation should be forwarded to [WebEditor@gov.ab.ca](mailto:WebEditor@gov.ab.ca)

Technical and service related questions should be forwarded to [WebMaster@gov.ab.ca](mailto:WebMaster@gov.ab.ca)

Copyright(c); 2001 Government of Alberta

Return to [Government Home Page](#)