



October 1, 2009

Alberta Land Stewardship Act authorizes regional planning under Land-use Framework

Edmonton... A bold, new approach to guide the way Alberta manages its lands and natural resources is on track with the proclamation of the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act*.

The Act creates the legal authority to implement the Land-use Framework, which will help Alberta achieve a better balance between the economic growth that creates prosperity and Albertans' environmental and social values. It was passed in the spring 2009 session of the Alberta Legislature, and received Royal Assent on June 4.

"We continue to make good progress in meeting the commitments we made to Albertans in the Land-use Framework," said Sustainable Resource Development Minister Ted Morton. "And we will continue to listen to Albertans as we move forward with regional plans."

The Act enables the establishment of seven planning regions congruent with Alberta's major watersheds and rural municipal boundaries, and requires a plan for each region. Regional plans will consider the combined impact of all activities on the land, air, water and biodiversity, and will be developed with advice from Albertans. Regional plans will integrate provincial energy, environment, water and other policies at the regional level. The regional planning process is underway in the Lower Athabasca and South Saskatchewan regions. See a map of the seven planning regions at <http://www.landuse.alberta.ca/>.

Regional plans developed and approved by government will be provincial policy, with the force of regulations. The Act allows for municipal plans like the Calgary Metropolitan Plan and Capital Region Plan to be incorporated as sub-regional plans.

The Act also establishes a Land Use Secretariat to support the implementation of the framework, and makes consequential amendments to 27 other Alberta Acts to ensure better alignment of policy and decision-making across provincial ministries, local governments and boards. Resulting amendments to the *Public Lands Act* and *Forests Act* will come into force in the spring of 2010 after additional work on supporting regulations is completed.

Four conservation and stewardship tools are defined in the Act to help protect specific landscapes, views, and lands of ecological or heritage value. The tools are conservation easements, conservation offsets, conservation directives and transfer of development credits.

The *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* can be accessed at www.landuse.alberta.ca/alsa.

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Overview of the Alberta Land Stewardship Act

Purposes of Act

- Provide a means by which the Alberta government can give direction and provide leadership in identifying the economic, environmental and social objectives of the province of Alberta
- Provide a means to plan for the future, recognizing the need to manage activity to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of current and future generations of Albertans, including Aboriginal peoples
- Create legislation and policy that enable sustainable development by taking account of and responding to the cumulative effect of activities

Part 1: Regional Plans

The Act sets out provisions to make, amend and review regional plans; defines what a regional plan must and may include, and sets out provisions for implementing regional plans.

Part 2: Nature and Effect of Regional Plans and Compliance Declarations

The Act defines the legal nature of regional plans as policies of the Alberta government. It defines them as binding on the Crown, local governments, decision-makers and others.

Part 3: Conservation and Stewardship Tools

The Act defines and has provisions for four conservation and stewardship tools that may be used to protect a landscape, viewscape or other ecological or heritage value.

Part 4: Regional Planning Process and its Administration

The Act defines the process for developing a regional plan including the authority of Cabinet, regional advisory councils, and the Land Use Secretariat. The Act also addresses other administrative matters such as regulation-making authority.

Part 5: Transitional Provisions, Related Amendments and Coming into Force

The Act addresses transitional provisions to bring existing entities under the Act, and identifies consequential amendments to 27 pieces of Alberta legislation.

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