

Berland Sub-regional Plan

Overview

The plan guides how public land and resources are managed over time to balance economic activity, ecosystem health, community well-being, and Indigenous ways of life including the exercise of Treaty rights. Sub-regional plans help guide decisions about where activities such as forestry, energy development, recreation, and restoration can take place.

Key components of the plan

Zonation

- The sub-region is divided into two distinct zones: Go Zone including Compartment A, and Nature-first Zone.
- Each zone is designed based on ecological sensitivity, existing disturbance, and caribou habitat value. The zones help to inform the decision-making process for development activities, while prioritizing restoration activities for inactive development footprints.
 - **Go Zone** – The outcome for this zone is to support a working landscape while minimizing overall footprint.
 - The plan supports the expected scale of future development required to enable economic growth, including a doubling of oil and gas production, with few new constraints or requirements outside of Compartment A.
 - Compartment A (within the Go Zone)– The outcome for this zone is to achieve the greatest improvement in landscape intactness as soon as possible, while still supporting a working landscape.
 - The plan prioritizes early restoration and requirements for new development to create a landscape that can better support recreational, cultural and Indigenous traditional land uses.
 - **Nature-first Zone** – The outcome for this zone is to prioritize conservation and ecosystem services with opportunities for traditional land uses, outdoor recreation, habitat restoration and habitat enhancement.
 - The plan prioritizes conservation outcomes, while allowing for some development where permitted.

Outcomes

1. Support economic opportunities that provide benefits to local municipalities, Indigenous peoples, and all Albertans.
 - Double oil and gas production – enable growth while reducing disturbance through restoration requirements.
 - Provide certainty for forestry aggregate harvest to reduce fragmentation and support wildfire risk management.
 - Enable sustainable development of surface materials, minerals, peat, and tourism activities in appropriate areas while minimizing environmental impacts.
2. Consolidate and manage development to support landscape intactness and self-sustaining plant and wildlife populations, with a focus on species at risk.
 - Access management – manage road development by creating a long-term road network and increasing landscape intactness in caribou range over time.
 - Restoration requirements – focusing on early restoration to reduce the disturbance on the landscape, especially in sensitive areas and areas important for caribou.
 - Monitoring – ongoing assessment of species, habitat, and landscape indicators to track progress.
3. Support recreational, cultural and traditional land uses, including the practice of constitutionally recognized rights in the sub-region, for the benefit of local people, Indigenous peoples, and all Albertans.
 - Build capacity to enable Indigenous participation in the implementation of the plan.
 - Support Indigenous peoples to practice traditional land uses such as non-commercial harvest of plants and fungi for food and medicine.
 - Recreation management – areas are prioritized for recreation and tourism activities including Indigenous-led tourism.

Sub-region facts

- The Berland sub-region is located in the southern portion of the Upper Peace Region and the western portion of the Upper Athabasca Region, covering 19,529 square kilometers, bounded by the Simonette River to the north, the boundary between Willmore Wilderness Area and Jasper National Park to the south, the Athabasca River and Highway 43 to the east, and the Smoky River to the west.
- The Berland sub-region is located in the Upper Peace and Upper Athabasca regions, which do not have approved regional plans..
- Recent amendments to the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* enable the government to establish sub-regions and approve stand-alone sub-regional plans without the need for inclusion in a regional plan in these circumstances. The draft Berland Sub-regional Plan and its regulatory details are proposed to be approved as a standalone plan under the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* until a regional plan in this area comes into effect.
- The sub-region features upper and lower foothills landscapes, extensive forested areas, numerous lakes and wetlands, and major river systems, supporting a wide range of ecological, recreational, and resource-based values.
- Public land recreation areas and natural areas make up 13.5% of the region.
- The Berland sub-region lies within Treaty 8 territory and includes several First Nations reserve areas.
- The sub-region supports a working landscape with major land uses including oil and gas development, forestry, coal and other minerals, tourism, recreation, hunting, fishing, trapping, and Indigenous traditional land uses,
- Natural resource extraction is a significant economic driver in the Berland sub—region. The oil and gas sector contributes approximately \$3.96 billion in GDP and supports a labour force of about 5,140 people, while the forestry sector contributes approximately \$365 million in GDP and supports about 1,725 jobs, with employment benefits extending to communities both inside and outside the sub-region.
- Forest management agreements cover 71% of the sub-region, petroleum and natural gas tenure covers 70% of the sub-region, metallics and industrial minerals tenure covers 7% of the sub-region, and coal tenures cover 7% of the sub-region.

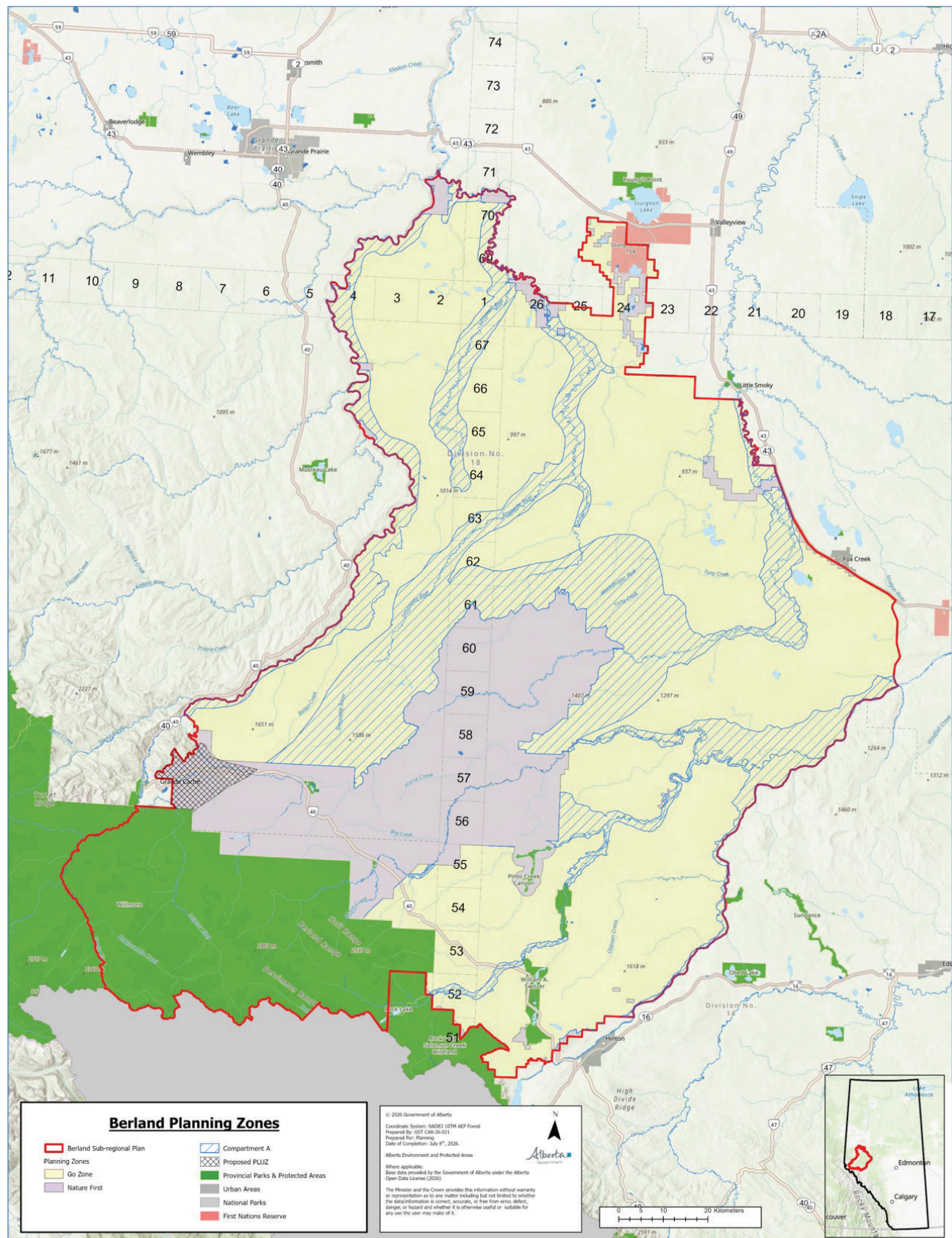
Caribou range boundaries

- Caribou range boundaries show areas used by woodland caribou over time, based on historical information and satellite GPS collars.
- These boundaries have been updated over time periodically since 1985 as new information became available. The last update was in 2010 using data collected up to 2008.

Did you know...

- Two caribou ranges occur within the sub region: the À la Pêche southern mountain caribou range and the Little Smoky boreal caribou range, population and habitat.
- The Berland sub-region is located entirely within Alberta's Green area, which is comprised of public lands managed for natural resource production, watershed, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, and other uses.

Figure 1: Map of the Berland sub-region showing proposed zonation in the draft plan.



Website: alberta.ca/berland-sub-regional-plan-engagement

Email: epa.berlandsrp@gov.ab.ca

©2026 Government of Alberta | Published: August 2026 | Environment and Protected Areas

Classification: Public



Figure 2: Map of the Berland sub-region showing caribou ranges.

