

Caribou Mountains Sub-regional Plan

Well-based energy and minerals

This plan enables future energy projects and provides flexibility for all types of well-based energy development, including petroleum and natural gas and other emerging well-based energy resources.

Key components of the plan

Zonation

- The plan provides flexibility and certainty for ongoing energy development within the Go Zone. Compartment A has more targeted strategies to improve intactness in caribou ranges and other sensitive areas.
- The Nature-first zone does not allow new surface disturbance except where needed for pre-existing energy tenures.

Managing footprint

- New, or expansion of, surface disturbance may be permitted in Compartment A, that includes caribou range, when planned with restoration activities that demonstrate and overall reduction in disturbance.
- Limited exceptions are allowed for supporting infrastructure. Other energy-related activities must comply with access management requirements.

- Restoration will be prioritized in the following order: formal dispositions within caribou ranges, formal dispositions within all zones, and legacy seismic lines as identified by the Caribou Habitat Recovery Program.
- Restoration targets have been created to remove unproductive well pad infrastructure from the land.
- Tracking and reporting on restoration targets of inactive footprint is required to monitor progress.

Access and linear feature management

- Energy-related roads, pipelines, transmission lines, and seismic activities must minimize clearing widths, reduce long-term fragmentation, and encourage vegetation regrowth.
- The plan provides strategies to limit cumulative effects and support caribou habitat recovery.

Emerging energy resources

- Provides policy certainty for emerging and well-based energy resources, including geothermal development where compatible with zone objectives and environmental outcomes

Energy facts

- Existing petroleum and natural gas tenure covers approximately 5.5% of the sub-region. Although petroleum and natural gas is the primary energy resource extracted in the sub-region, production has been declining over time.
- Parts of the sub-region show potential for geothermal and other emerging energy resources, which will require availability of well-based tenure.

Did you know...

- Alberta has a goal to double oil and gas production, which will require energy production and export across the province, including this sub-region.
- Not all energy footprint is permanent. The plan emphasizes restoring inactive wells and unused roads, helping to improve landscape conditions over time.
- New development is linked to demonstrating progress on restoring older, inactive energy infrastructure.
- Some areas are off limits to new energy development. In the Nature-first Zone, no new surface disturbance will be allowed, although existing approvals are honoured.
- By restoring land that is no longer needed, the plan helps ensure space remains available for future economic opportunities.