

Pekisko Heritage Rangeland Management Plan

Engagement information

Heritage rangelands

Heritage rangelands conserve native prairie and foothills grasslands while using grazing and traditional ranching practices to maintain the native grassland ecology. The key objective of a heritage rangeland is to preserve biological diversity and maintain the ecological health of native grasslands through stewardship and appropriate land use.

Key facts

- Heritage rangelands are managed to conserve native grasslands through grazing and stewardship.
- The heritage rangeland is managed under the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas and Heritage Rangelands Act* (WAERNAHR) and the *Public Lands Act*.
- All users requesting to access these lands are encouraged to share stewardship responsibility by helping maintain ecological integrity and respecting the presence of grazing activities and the private land within and around the designated area.

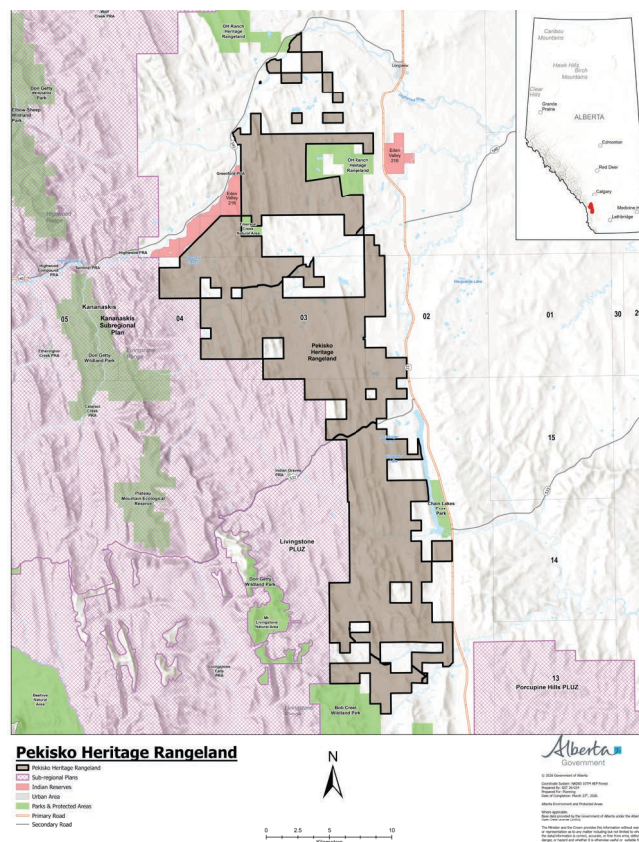
Pekisko Heritage Rangeland

The Pekisko Heritage Rangeland is a large, protected area of public land southwest of Longview, Alberta. It is located between the OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland to the north and the Black Creek Heritage Rangeland to the south and east of the Cataract Creek Snow Vehicle Public Land Use Zone. The Pekisko Heritage Rangeland boundary contains only Crown lands managed under long-term grazing leases.

The Pekisko area also contains some privately owned parcels, some of which are embedded in the heritage rangeland boundary and some are protected by conservation easements. Any private lands in the area are excluded from the Pekisko Heritage Rangeland.

Pekisko contains one of the largest contiguous blocks of native Foothills fescue grassland and Foothills parkland in Alberta.

Figure 1: Pekisko Heritage Rangeland



Management plan

The Pekisko Heritage Rangeland Management Plan is being developed to support direction set out in the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (Strategy 3.11). Once complete, it will guide how the area is protected and used over time, with a focus on sustainable grazing, invasive plant management, fish and wildlife, access management and public awareness.

The management plan will help set clear expectations for fescue grassland conservation, grazing, low-impact access and ongoing stewardship actions in the Pekisko Heritage Rangeland. It is intended to support long-term protection of native grasslands and species at risk, while recognizing existing land uses, local relationships and Indigenous traditional uses.

Management intent

The Ministries of Forestry and Parks and Environment and Protected Areas oversee management of the heritage rangeland and work with disposition holders to support stewardship and responsible land use. Management decisions recognize the importance of conservation, local relationships and respect for adjacent private lands.

The Pekisko Heritage Rangeland will be managed to preserve its natural heritage, including soil, plants, wildlife, landscape features and ecological processes for future generations. The management approach is intended to maintain a balance between conservation and human activity, including grazing and other compatible uses.

Existing use and access

Existing grazing dispositions will continue to be managed under the *Public Lands Act*. For eligible leaseholders in good standing, grazing lease terms may extend from 20 to 30 years. Existing petroleum and natural gas tenure (pre-designation) would also be honoured in keeping with current government policy.

To help protect native fescue grasslands, low-impact activities such as hiking, cycling and backcountry camping are permitted in heritage rangelands, while public motorized access, including for recreational and hunting use, is not. Motorized access is permitted for disposition holders working within the terms of their disposition and for access to private land within the boundary. Recreational access remains subject to applicable access rules, including prior contact with the grazing lessee, and access to adjacent conservation easement lands requires the consent of the responsible agency or individual.

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan amendment

A focused amendment to the [South Saskatchewan Regional Plan](#) is proposed to Note A on page 209. The amendment will enable forest harvesting that manages forest encroachment for range health.

Pekisko Special Management Area

The Pekisko Special Management Area, identified in the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan, has been added to the Ghost-Kananaskis sub-regional plan area. This area will retain the overall management intent as a transition area between the grasslands and the forest. The key objective is to complement the heritage rangeland and ensure the fescue native grasslands are managed and conserved appropriately.

Engagement

Stakeholders in the Pekisko area will be invited to an engagement session to learn more and provide feedback on the draft management plan.

Stakeholder feedback can be shared through an online survey until November 17, 2026.

Indigenous communities and organizations in the Pekisko area will be invited to meet and provide written submissions.

Stay informed

Learn more about the plan at alberta.ca/PekiskoEngagement, or contact the study team at epa.pekisko@gov.ab.ca.