

Red Earth Sub-regional Plan

Energy

The plan enables future energy projects and provides flexibility for all types of energy development, including oil sands, petroleum and natural gas while managing environmental impacts.

Key components of the plan

Zonation

- The plan provides flexibility and certainty for ongoing energy development within the Go Zone and the in-situ project areas. Compartment A has more targeted strategies to improve intactness in caribou ranges and other sensitive areas (i.e. bison ranges and key wildlife biodiversity areas). Find details of zonation in the Overview factsheet.
- 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 such as water wells, disposal well, oil sands evaluation wells etc. 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.
- Well pad targets have been established in the plan for restoration to remove unproductive well pad infrastructure from the land.
- Tracking and reporting on restoration targets of inactive footprint is required to monitor progress.

Access & 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.

Energy facts

- Oil and gas activity in the Red Earth sub-region is largely focused on conventional oil, contributing about 6% of Alberta's total conventional oil production.
- Oil sands tenure covers about 24.7% of the sub region, with most production expected to remain steady.
- While petroleum and natural gas rights cover about 9.7% of the Red Earth sub region, natural gas production in the sub-region represents a small share of Alberta's total output.

Did you know...

- Alberta has a goal to double oil and gas production which will require energy production and export from this sub-region.
- **Not all energy footprint is permanent.** The plan emphasizes restoring inactive wells and unused roads, helping return land to productive use over time, helping to improve landscape conditions over time.
- **Energy development must “clean up after itself.”** 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 Zones, no new surface disturbance will be issued, although existing approvals and access to existing tenure are honoured.
- **Restoration helps make room for future development.** By restoring land that is no longer needed, the plan helps ensure space remains available for future economic opportunities.