

Red Earth 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 Indigenous and Treaty rights. Sub-regional plans help guide decisions about where activities such as forestry, energy development, recreation, and restoration can take place.

Key Components

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 and bison 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 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 more requirements for new development to create a landscape that can better support 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.
 - Areas will prioritize 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 – managing 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.

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.
- The plan is based on new caribou range boundaries that reflect everything we have learned about caribou occurrence, movement, distribution, and habitat since 2010.

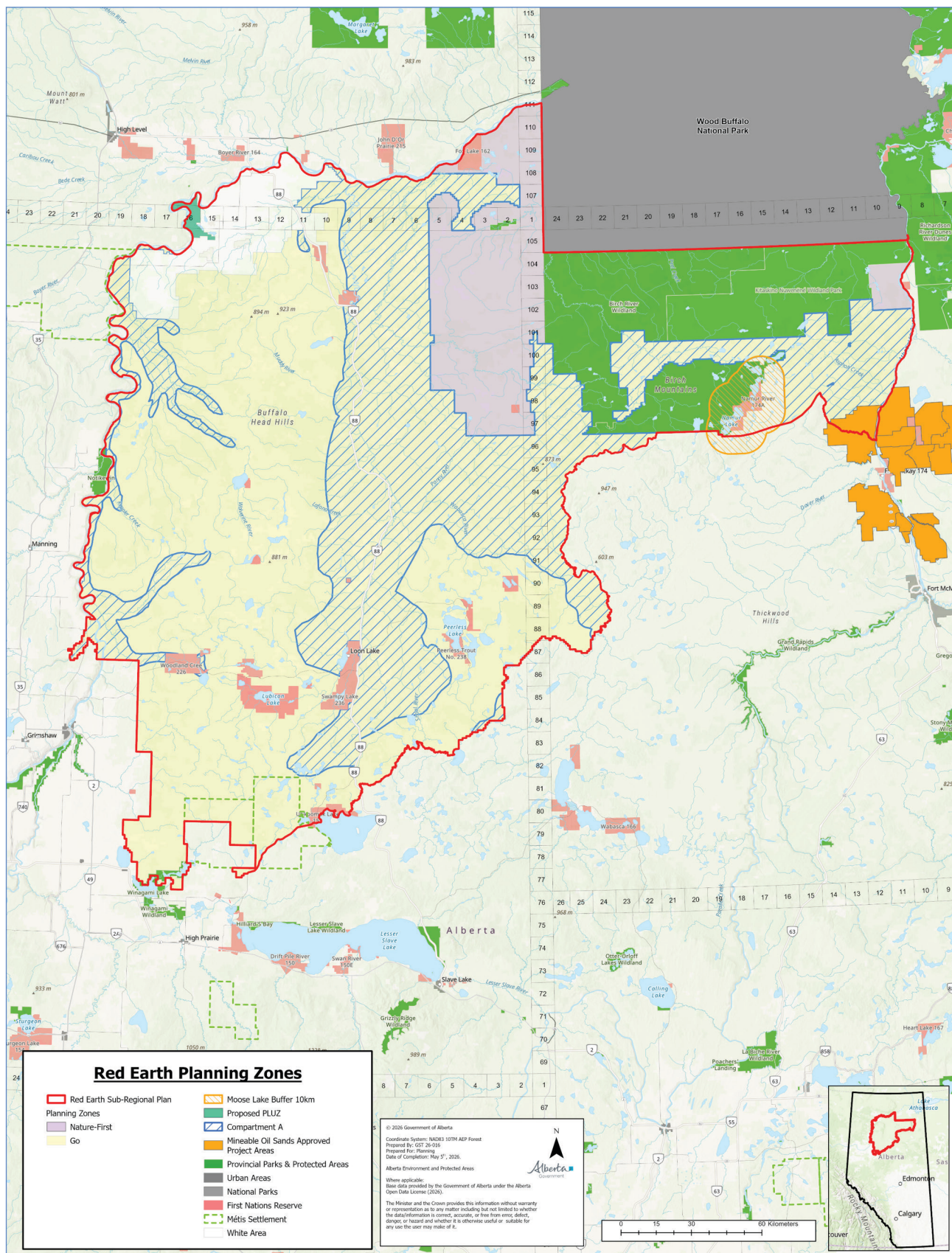
Sub-region facts

- The Red Earth sub-region spans from the Peace River in the north to the Peavine Métis Settlement in the south, with boundaries following major rivers such as the Utikuma, Liege, and Island Rivers.
- The sub-region covers 61,306 km².
- The sub-region features boreal forests, wetlands, river systems, and agricultural land and supports energy, forestry, agriculture, and recreation and tourism sectors.
- The Red Earth sub-region is located in the Lower Athabasca, Lower Peace, Upper Athabasca and Upper Peace regions.
- Proposed amendments to the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan will enable the sub-regional plan and its regulatory details. The *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* provides for a regional plan to “manage an activity, effect, cause of an effect or person outside a planning region until a regional plan comes into force with respect to the matter or person”. This allows the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan to direct activities in the other regions.

Did you know...

- The sub-region is home to multiple at-risk species, including woodland caribou, wood bison, and sensitive species including grizzly bears, and trumpeter swans.
- There are three boreal caribou herd ranges located in the sub-region: Red Earth, Birch mountains, West Side Athabasca.
- There are three wood bison herd ranges located in the sub-region: Wabasca, Richardson, and Garden River.
- To enable the proposed Red Earth Sub-regional plan under the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act*, amendments to the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan are proposed because the Red Earth sub-region is partially within the Lower Athabasca Region.
- Public feedback gathered through this engagement will be considered before the plan is finalized.

Figure 1: Map of the Red Earth sub-region showing caribou ranges and proposed zonation in the draft plan.



Website: alberta.ca/red-earth-sub-regional-plan-engagement

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