

Red Earth Sub-regional Plan

Peat

The Red Earth Sub-region contains a large potential for peat applications. The Government of Alberta's existing directive on the *Allocation and Sustainable Management of Peat Resources on Public Land* (2017), established under the *Public Lands Act*, governs the allocation and management of peat resources on public land. The additional direction for peat harvest in the sub-regional plan helps to support the desired outcomes.

Outcomes

- Maintain a diversity of economic opportunities in the sub-region.
- Retain lands that support caribou recovery, biodiversity conservation and indigenous traditional land uses, including Treaty rights.

Key components of the plan

Manage peat extraction responsibly.

- New peat extraction operations must be located entirely outside of caribou range, and the Nature-first Zone, Compartment A, Public Land Use Zone, and Special Access Zones. Existing approved dispositions will be honoured.
 - These zones are intended to reduce disturbance in caribou and wood bison ranges, Key Wildlife Biodiversity Zones, Special Access Zones, and Alberta Significant Landforms.
- Peat extraction operations must comply with the *Allocation and Sustainable Management of Peat Resources on Public Land* (2017) and the *Requirements for Conservation and Reclamation Plans for Peat Operations in Alberta* (2016), as may be updated from time to time.
- Amendments or updates to an existing approval that modify the approved end land use will require technical review and mitigation.

Monitor and report on outcomes

- Alberta will monitor and review indicators to inform sustainable peatland harvest and minimize disturbance in peatlands of high value for fire prevention and ecological values.
- If negative trends in water quality are identified in adjacent waterbodies or watercourses additional mitigations may be required.
- When submitting the annual operating report, disposition holders will report on the steps in the progression completed to achieve reclamation.

Did you know...

- Sphagnum peat is the primary type of peat harvested in Canada.
- Sphagnum moss grows in wetlands including fens and bogs and are often referred to as peatlands.
- Peatlands contain numerous hydrological feedback loops, which can stabilize and increase peatland water storage, which will then be slowly released to the surrounding landscape during drought as streamflow or infiltration to the sub-soil.