

Amendments to the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan

South Athabasca Sub-regional Plan

Sub-regional Planning

Sub-regional planning supports the Government of Alberta's commitment to maintain working landscapes that can provide for economic, social, and environmental outcomes. The Government of Alberta has identified land use planning as a priority and the province remains committed to developing and implementing sub-regional plans.

The Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) approved an implementation strategy to provide detailed land use planning for the green area.

To enable the proposed South Athabasca Sub-regional Plan (SASRP) under the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act*, amendments to the LARP are required. The Government of Alberta is replacing the Cold Lake Sub-regional Plan with the proposed SASRP and Regulatory Details.

South Athabasca Sub-regional Plan

The South Athabasca sub-region is rich in natural resources, home to diverse species and provides economic, subsistence, cultural, and recreational values for the communities it sustains. Much of the landscape is managed for resources, watershed, and wildlife. The sub-region overlaps significant bitumen resources and is important for supporting Alberta's energy security. Protected lands and public recreation areas contribute to the valued culture of local people and practicing landscape for local Indigenous communities and Métis people.

The SASRP must be aligned with the LARP. Key outcomes of the SASRP that align include:

- Support for ongoing economic opportunities for industry,
- Keeping the Clearwater River as a conservation area, and
- Maintaining Crown lands that support biodiversity conservation and Indigenous traditional land uses.

South Athabasca Regulatory Details

Regulatory details are proposed to make specific requirements of the SASRP enforceable.

Lower Athabasca Regional Plan Amendments

Proposed amendments to the LARP are focused on enabling the SASRP and changes within the South Athabasca sub-region.

Enabling the South Athabasca Sub-regional Plan

Proposed amendments to the LARP's Strategic Plan, Implementation Plan and Regulatory Details are required to:

- establish the South Athabasca sub-region,
- adopt the sub-regional plan's policy directions
- include the sub-regional plan's Regulatory Details as Part 9 of the LARP,
- make directions in LARP and SASRP consistent, and include important implementation requirements, such as monitoring and reporting

The South Athabasca sub-region is in both the Lower Athabasca and Upper Athabasca Regions. Proposed amendments to the LARP will enable the SASRP and regional plan to manage activities outside of the Lower Athabasca region. Within the Upper Athabasca Region, the sub-regional plan's directions will provide land-use directions only in the South Athabasca sub-region.

Enabling implementation of LARP commitments in the South Athabasca sub-regional area

In this sub-region, the LARP committed to enabling forestry access to timber resources outside the Gipsy-Gordon Wildland Park conservation area, a new conservation area established by the regional plan.

In July 2025, roughly 95% of this area was designated under the *Provincial Parks Act* as Gipsy-Gordon Wildland Provincial Park. Because road access is not compatible with the proposed Wildland Provincial Park designation in the regional plan, the remaining 5% of this conservation area requires a different designation to implement the intended access to timber resources.

Proposed amendments to the LARP in Schedule F: LARP Land Uses and in the Schedule G: LARP Digital Map would change the name and designation for the remaining portion of the Gipsy-Gordon Wildland Park conservation area from a Wildland Provincial Park under the *Provincial Parks Act* to a Public Land Use Zone (PLUZ) with conservation intent under the *Public Lands Act*.

For more information: alberta.ca/south-athabasca-sub-regional-plan-engagement

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The area would be established as the Clearwater River Conservation Area. A public land use zone designation supports the intention for long-term forestry access and maintains the conservation intent for the area.

More information about the proposed Clearwater River Conservation Area can be found on Page 38 of the South Athabasca Sub-regional Plan.

Enabling a multi-use corridor to be created to cross the Clearwater River

The LARP describes the ability for the Government of Alberta to identify multi-use corridors for the co-location of linear infrastructure that support critical economic linkages to markets. The LARP speaks to future planning work to identify corridors linking the Athabasca and Cold Lake oil sands regions and Alberta's Industrial Heartland to minimize the environmental impact of individual lines and routes.

Schedule F of the LARP identifies multi-use corridors as an acceptable land use in the regional plan's new conservation areas, including the Gipsy-Gordon Wildland Park conservation area.

Proposed amendments to Schedule F: LARP Land Uses and in the Schedule G: LARP Digital Map would identify multi-use corridors as an acceptable land use in the Clearwater River Conservation Area.

The inclusion of proposed SASRP Regulatory Details in Part 9 of the LARP would legally establish a multi-use corridor to cross the Clearwater River through the Clearwater River Conservation Area as identified on Page 38 of the South Athabasca Sub-regional Plan.

Updating details to LARP Schedule F: Land Uses and Schedule G: LARP Digital Map

Proposed amendments to the Schedule F: LARP Land Uses and the Schedule G: LARP Digital Map only include updates to conservation areas within this sub-region.

1. Updates to show specific designated parks in the existing conservation areas:
 - Dillon River Wildland Provincial Park (2018)
 - Gipsy-Gordon Wildland Provincial Park (GGWPP, 2025)
2. Consolidating the Gipsy Lake Wildland Provincial Park and Gipsy-Gordon Wildland Provincial Park
 - The designation of Gipsy-Gordon Wildland Provincial Park (2025) incorporated the area of Gipsy Lake Wildland Provincial Park.

- Changes are proposed to the LARP for consistency with the designation and with the SASRP directions. Together, these changes to the LARP's land uses for the Gipsy-Gordon Wildland Provincial Park would:

- honour existing grazing leases as a compatible land use,
- allow forestry activity only for wildfire, insect and disease management.
- restrict a multi-use corridor to be proposed as an acceptable land-use within the Gipsy-Gordon Wildland Provincial Park.

3. Adding the Clearwater River Conservation Area, designation as a public land use zone with conservation intents, supporting forestry access to timber resources and a multi-use corridor.

Note: the proposed new conservation areas in the Cold Lake Air Weapons Range will only be identified in the SASRP and its Regulatory Details.

Public Engagement

Albertans are invited to have their say and help determine how land in the South Athabasca should be used by providing input on the draft sub-regional plan, the draft regulatory details, and on these amendments to the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan.

The *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* requires holders of statutory consents be notified and provided an opportunity for the holder of the statutory consent to propose alternative means or measures of achieving or maintaining the policy objectives. This current public engagement period, and all engagement and consultation activities conducted in the development of the South Athabasca Sub-regional Plan, will be considered part of the regional plan amendment process.

We Want to Hear from You

Your input will help the Government of Alberta understand how the amendments, the plan and associated regulatory details may affect you, and can help identify opportunities to improve the plan.