

South Athabasca Sub-regional Plan

Energy

This plan enables future energy projects and provides flexibility for all types of energy development, including oil sands, petroleum and natural gas tenure (PNG), carbon capture and storage, and other emerging resources.

Key Components of the Plan

- **Zonation (Page 9)** – “Go Zone” enables the greatest amount of future development with few new operational or policy requirements.
- **Access management (Page 14)** – creates complete flexibility for activities within an in situ project area.
- **Riparian management (Page 19)** – exempts most energy activities within the riparian setbacks and creates a smaller setback within an in situ project area compared to the rest of the sub-region.
- **Cumulative Energy Disturbance (Page 22)** – identifies the change in expected disturbance from new energy activity and restoration efforts, in each zone through time.
- **Restoration (Page 23)** – targets for inactive well restoration support improvements in landscape intactness over the next three decades.
- **Footprint management (Page 22)** – energy footprint outside an in situ project area is minimized, especially in priority areas.
- **Multi-use corridor (Page 38)** – identifying a multi-use corridor across the Clearwater River enables future pipeline crossings, including for carbon capture and storage.

Energy Facts

In this sub-region:

- In 2023, over 1.2 million barrels per day (bbl/d) of bitumen was produced.
- In 2023, oil and gas extraction made up roughly 83% of the GDP and 23% of the labour force.
- Approximately 79% of Alberta's in situ bitumen is produced.
- Less than 1% of Alberta's natural gas is produced.
- Energy tenure covers 47% of the sub-region.
- PNG tenure covers 35% of the sub-region.

Did you know...

- Alberta has a goal to double oil and gas production which will require increasing energy production and export from this sub-region.
- In the eastern sub-regions, including the South Athabasca, oil and gas production is predominately in situ, or “in place”. However, in the southern part of the sub-region, well-based cold flow production is common.
- In the western sub-regions (e.g. Upper Smoky), oil and gas production is predominately well-based.
- Providing regulatory certainty through this plan can support investment in energy-based industries.

Map of the South Athabasca sub-region showing the zones, the long-term road network, and the location of project areas existing at the time of plan approval (Figure 2 in the draft South Athabasca Sub-regional Plan)

