

# Sub-regional Planning

## The Upper Smoky Draft Plan - highlights

### The Government of Alberta is seeking feedback on the draft Upper Smoky Sub-Regional Plan.

The proposed plan reflects Alberta's ongoing commitment to responsible resource development. It seeks to maintain a strong economy, resilient communities, and healthy ecosystems.

The proposed approaches in the draft plan are focused on managing footprint from various land uses to allow economic development in the region while also continuing to improve the overall landscape.

### Forestry

Provide certainty for forest harvesting while considering other landscape values.

- Introduce a Harvest Timing Series for harvest in caribou ranges, which sets out areas for harvesting by decade over the next one hundred years.

### Restoration

- Coordinate the restoration of legacy seismic lines within caribou ranges, through the caribou Habitat Recovery Program.
- Remove inactive and economically unproductive features related to petroleum and natural gas, including inactive well sites and roads.
- Restoration targets to be established.
- Recreation and Tourism
- Focus and enhance the management of visitor use to provide quality and sustainable outdoor recreation and tourism experiences.

### Coal

- Manage coal footprint within designated Coal Activity zones 1 (surface mining) and 2 (underground mining).
- Consider current and future potential land uses and pressures while recognizing the importance for local jobs and communities.

### Conservation

- Explore the creation of new and expanded conservation areas.
- Designating these areas will help to conserve environmentally sensitive terrain, areas that support traditional use, and habitat for fish and wildlife, including caribou, mountain goats, bighorn sheep, grizzly bear, bull trout and American golden plover, and provide intact landscapes for the practice of traditional land uses and a variety of recreational activities.

### Indigenous Traditional Land-uses

- Support the ability of Indigenous peoples to access and use the land and resources.
- Explore and pursue opportunities for inclusion of Indigenous peoples and values in plan implementation and future land-use planning, including economic development opportunities.

### Roads and Access

- Encourage a coordinated approach to road development that supports resource development, supports removal of economically unproductive footprint, and reduces impacts on natural values.

### Other

- Provide direction for sustainable development of rock-hosted metallic and industrial minerals found in surface or subsurface rock formations in the Go zone.
- Extract surface materials in a manner that reduces overall footprint.
- Support the stewardship of rangeland ecosystems and protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- Support sustainable peat development opportunities.
- Existing commitments outside the Go Zone will be honoured.

## Background

Sub-regional plans are a key component of Alberta's approach to maintaining working landscapes while supporting a broad range of land uses and values.

The Upper Smoky sub-region, located south of Grande Prairie, is rich in natural resources such as petroleum, natural gas, timber, coal, minerals, rangelands, and surface materials. \$21.2 billion of Alberta's gross domestic product was derived from the sub-region in 2020. Approximately 85,000 Albertans have jobs that rely on economic activities in the sub-region.

Upper Smoky is home to many species, including two of the last three southern mountain caribou populations remaining on Alberta's provincially managed lands. Caribou are a species at risk and their presence in the sub-region have declined in response to human land uses.

The Upper Smoky Sub-Regional Plan was informed by recommendations of a Ministerial Task Force, sector working groups, an Indigenous communities and organizations working group, and input from other stakeholders. Through these conversations, a broad range of Albertans contributed to the development of the draft plan.

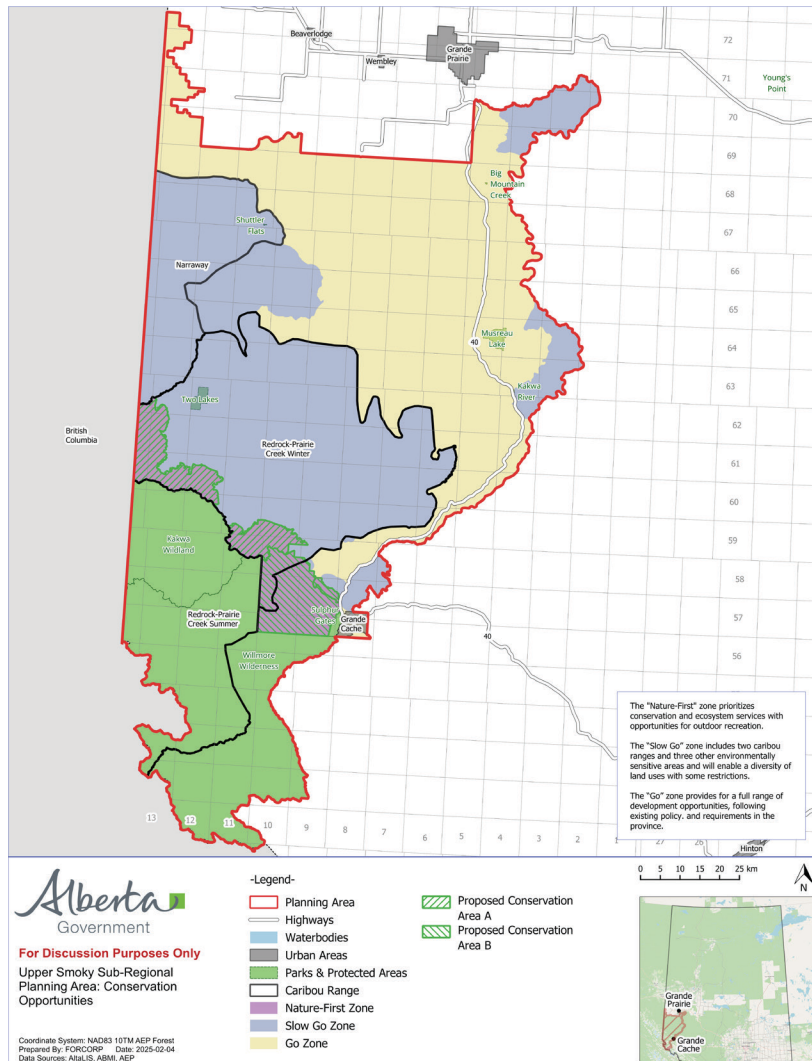
## For more information:

Website: [alberta.ca/upper-smoky-sub-regional-plan-engagement](https://alberta.ca/upper-smoky-sub-regional-plan-engagement)

Email: [EPA.SRPRegDetailsRP@gov.ab.ca](mailto:EPA.SRPRegDetailsRP@gov.ab.ca)

Map: Conservation Areas

## Map :Conservation Areas



For further information: [alberta.ca](https://alberta.ca)

©2025 Government of Alberta | Published: April 2025 | Environment and Protected Areas

Classification: Public

