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Report - 1(c)

**Comparison of Management
Guidelines Under Current
Legislation and under the
Proposed *Natural Heritage Act***

Draft For Discussion Purposes

Alberta
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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This report is the third in a series of three reports that collectively outline the Government's proposed Policy Foundation for the new Natural Heritage Act. The three reports are:

- Report 1a - Proposed Policy Foundation for the *Natural Heritage Act*.
- Report 1b - Proposed Foundation for the *Natural Heritage Act* - Management Guidelines for Protected and Recreation Areas.
- Report 1c - Comparison of Management Guidelines under Current and Proposed Legislation.
- A report summarizing the above three reports is also now available.

A Comparison of Management Guidelines under Current Legislation and Proposed under the *Natural Heritage Act*

The three column table on the following pages provides a comparison of current management guidelines for recreation and protected areas with guidelines proposed for the new *Natural Heritage Act*.

Under the *Natural Heritage Act*, five classes are proposed. These are Provincial Nature Reserves, Wildland Provincial Parks, Natural Environment Provincial Parks, Heritage Rangelands, and Recreation Areas. Collectively, these form a spectrum that ranges from highly protected areas through to those sites which are established solely for outdoor recreation.

Exact comparison of the seven classes under the existing three Acts with the five classes under the proposed new Act is impossible. Many existing recreation and protected areas are currently not designated in the appropriate class. These sites would be moved to the most appropriate class under the new *Natural Heritage Act*. Therefore, comparisons are not as simple as indicating that two of the existing classes would be amalgamated into one new class. In general, however, sites would be redesignated as follows.

- ◆ **Provincial Nature Reserves** will include existing Ecological Reserves except those where livestock grazing is used to maintain grassland ecology. Also included in this class will be existing Natural Areas that have provincially significant natural values and are not encumbered with existing resource commitments.
- ◆ **Wildland Provincial Parks** will include the existing Wildland Parks under the *Provincial Parks Act*, the existing Wilderness Areas and Willmore Wilderness Park. Several of the larger Natural Areas could also be included in this class.
- ◆ **Natural Environment Provincial Parks** will include existing Provincial Parks with significant natural values along with a few similar Natural Areas. Some existing Recreation Areas also include significant natural values and could be included in this class.
- ◆ **Heritage Rangelands** will include existing Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas, primarily in the Grassland Natural Region, where it is desirable to continue to use livestock grazing as the primary management tool for sustaining the grassland ecology.
- ◆ **Recreation Areas** will include most existing Recreation Areas: those Provincial Parks dedicated to recreation facility development, and those Natural Areas that do not contain provincially significant resources but remain locally important for various types of outdoor recreation.

Current Management Guidelines	Proposed Management Guidelines	Change
<p>Petroleum and Natural Gas Development – Sub-surface mineral sales and activities related to oil and gas are prohibited in Wilderness Areas. New developments are prohibited in Ecological Reserves. Developments that exist at time of reserve establishment continue until resource is depleted. New subsurface rights may be sold subject to a 'no surface access' addendum. In Wildland Parks and Provincial Parks existing commitments are honoured. New mineral sales subject to 'no surface access' addendum. Conditions applied to minimize impacts. In Natural Areas, activities are determined on a case by case basis. Conditions are applied to protect sensitive and scenic land. In Recreation Areas ongoing oil and gas development is permitted subject to specific terms and conditions intended to minimize conflict with recreation use.</p>	<p>Petroleum and Natural Gas Development – In Nature Reserves, developments will be restricted to those that existed at the time of establishment. In those that existed at the time of establishment. In Wildland Parks, Natural Environment Parks and Heritage Rangelands developments will be restricted to existing sub-surface dispositions. All new sales will have a 'no surface access' addendum. Infrastructure associated with pre-existing commitments would be phased out over time in a planned manner. In Recreation Areas ongoing sales and development will be permitted subject to conditions.</p>	<p>Petroleum and Natural Gas Development – The Heritage Rangeland class has been added. Natural Areas where ongoing development is permitted are moved to the Recreation Area class. Natural Areas that have significant features and which currently preclude development are moved to the Nature Reserve class.</p> <p>No significant changes in other than reference to 'a phase out in a planned manner.'</p>
<p>Mainline Pipelines – Prohibited in Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Willmore Wilderness Park. Permitted in Provincial Parks and Natural Areas under strict conditions if no alternatives exist. Permitted in Recreation Areas.</p>	<p>Mainline Pipelines – Within Nature Reserves, Wildland Parks, Natural Environment Parks and Heritage Rangelands, existing mainline pipeline commitments will be honoured. Access for ongoing operations and maintenance of facilities, and for emergencies will continue. Expansion of the pipeline corridor may be allowed where there are no feasible alternatives for re-routing the pipeline. Permitted in Recreation Areas when the recreation value of the area is not compromised.</p>	<p>Mainline Pipeline – No change from current policy.</p>
<p>Road and Utilities – Prohibited in Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Willmore Wilderness Park. Permitted with conditions in Wildland Parks and Provincial Parks to access existing commitments. Permitted in Natural Areas and Recreation Areas on a case-by-case basis.</p>	<p>Road and Utilities – Prohibited in Nature Reserves. Permitted in Wildland Parks, Natural Environment Parks and Heritage Rangelands to access existing resource commitments using existing rights-of-way where possible.</p> <p>Permitted in Recreation Areas, where there are no serious conflicts with recreation use.</p>	<p>Road and Utilities – No significant change from existing policy.</p>
<p>Mining – Sub-surface Minerals – Currently prohibited in all classes with the exception of new Special Places where existing commitments will be honoured.</p>	<p>Mining – Sub-surface Minerals – Prohibited in all classes with the exception of honouring existing commitments. No new sub-surface dispositions. In the event that a company holding the rights wishes to develop a pre-existing commitment, the proposed mine would be reviewed through the existing regulatory process. Should a mine be approved, the area will be deleted from the protected area network.</p>	<p>Mining – Sub-surface Minerals – Existing Recreation and protected areas have very few existing sub-surface commitments for mining. The change in policy make provision to honour existing commitments in new Special Places</p>
<p>Surface Minerals – There are currently no dispositions for development of sand, gravel, clay, peat, marl or other surface minerals in any class of recreation and protected area.</p>	<p>Surface Minerals – Exploration and development of all surface minerals will continue to be prohibited.</p>	<p>Surface Minerals – No change from current policy.</p>
<p>Commercial Telecommunications Towers – Prohibited in Wilderness Areas. New towers prohibited in Ecological Reserves and Provincial Parks.</p>	<p>Commercial Telecommunications Towers – New towers prohibited in all classes except Recreation Areas.</p>	<p>Commercial Telecommunications Towers – no change from current practice.</p>

Current Management Guidelines	Proposed Management Guidelines	Change
<p>Domestic Livestock Grazing – Prohibited in Wilderness Areas and Wildland Parks, permitted as part of the ongoing management of Provincial Parks and Ecological Reserves in the Grassland, Parkland and Montane. Prohibited in Natural Areas with the exception of new Special Places in the Grassland Region where Natural Areas are being used as an interim designation pending the creation of the Heritage Rangeland class. Permitted in Recreation Areas but frequently precluded by small size.</p>	<p>Domestic Livestock Grazing – Will continue as the primary management tool in Heritage Rangelands and will be permitted in some Recreation Areas. Will continue in those Natural Environment Parks where it has been used as a management tool. Prohibited in Wildland Parks and Nature Reserves.</p>	<p>Domestic Livestock Grazing – No change in policy for existing areas.</p> <p>The Heritage Rangeland class is created to accommodate protected areas where grazing is the primary management tool for sustaining the grassland ecology. Natural Areas and Ecological Reserves with ongoing grazing will be moved to this class. Only those Natural Areas that are free from long term grazing dispositions will be considered for the Nature Reserve class.</p>
<p>Cultivation – Precluded in all classes except Recreation Areas such as Blackfoot where it is a component of multiple use management.</p>	<p>Cultivation – Prohibited in all classes except Recreation Areas where it may be component of multiple use management in areas such as Blackfoot.</p>	<p>Cultivation – No change from current policy.</p>
<p>Sustained Yield Timber Harvesting – Currently prohibited in all classes except some Recreation Areas where small-scale logging may be considered where it is compatible with recreation objectives.</p>	<p>Sustained Yield Timber Harvesting – Prohibited in all classes.</p>	<p>Sustained Yield Timber Harvesting – Current prohibitions continue in all protected areas classes. No change in policy other than in Recreation Areas. Areas committed to sustained yield timber harvesting will no longer be established as Recreation Areas.</p>
<p>Forest and Range Protection – Wildfires are suppressed in all classes on a priority basis.</p> <p>Most of the insect infestations and diseases are monitored and eradication/control programs are implemented as required to prevent spread to commercial forests on adjacent Crown land and/or to prevent significant ecological change within the area.</p>	<p>Forest and Range Protection – Wildfires will continue to be suppressed in all classes. Smaller fires, that may be beneficial to the maintenance or renewal of the ecological values of the areas may be allowed to burn in all protected areas provided the risk of them progressing to unmanageable size and intensity is minimal and no immediate control action is required to protect facilities within the area or other resources on adjacent lands. Such fires will be closely monitored.</p> <p>Pre-suppression measures associated with fire hazard reduction and fire detection may be considered in larger (e.g. >10 km²) Nature Reserves and in all other classes.</p> <p>Insect infestations and tree diseases within protected areas will continue to be monitored and eradication/control programs will be implemented when required to maintain the ecological values of the areas and to protect forest values and adjacent land. Sanitation cutting and controlled burning are the preferred control methods but other methods may be considered when necessary.</p> <p>Forest and Range Protection activities in all classes will be carried out in accordance with the Forest and Prairie Protection Act and its regulations and with approved management plans.</p>	<p>Forest and Range Protection – Some clarification of approach. No major change in policy</p>

Current Management Guidelines	Proposed Management Guidelines	Change
<p>Vegetation Management – Prohibited in wilderness Areas.</p> <p>Permitted in Ecological Reserves and to achieve specific ecological objectives</p> <p>Permitted in facility areas of Provincial Parks and in Recreation Areas for visitor safety and to enhance recreation opportunities.</p> <p>Permitted in all classes as required to comply with the Weed Control Act.</p>	<p>Vegetation Management – Permitted in all classes to comply with the Weed Control Act using methods that are effective and least detrimental to non-target organisms.</p> <p>Permitted in all protected areas to achieve specific ecological objectives. May be permitted in recreation areas where it does not conflict with recreational use.</p> <p>While the use of prescribed burning and prescribed tree and stand removal by cutting will be the preferred tools in vegetation management, other, alternative protocols may also be considered provided ecological objectives are not significantly compromised.</p>	<p>Vegetation Management – Would permit management activity in Wilderness Areas, and would increase the usable options available.</p>
<p>Water Management – Water management structures prohibited in Ecological Reserves, Wilderness Areas. No specific prohibition in Provincial Parks, Wildland Provincial Parks or Recreation Areas. Small weirs are located in some parks and Recreation Areas. Many Recreation Areas are adjacent to reservoirs and provide recreation access.</p>	<p>Water Management – Diversion of water or other water management activities would be prohibited in Nature Reserves and Wildland parks. Subject to the Water Act, the Department may carry out management activities to achieve specific preservation objectives or protect outdoor recreation facilities in Natural Environment Parks and Heritage Rangelands.</p> <p>Water management to enhance outdoor recreation may be considered in Recreation Areas.</p>	<p>Water Management – Some formalization of existing 'practice'.</p> <p>No significant policy change.</p> <p>Note: New Water Act not yet in effect. It will replace the existing Water Resources Act.</p>
<p>Motor Vehicle Access – Prohibited in Wilderness Areas and Willmore Wilderness Park. Prohibited in Ecological Reserves except for management activities or activities associated with a valid disposition. Restricted to designated roads in Provincial Parks, Recreation Areas and Natural Areas.</p>	<p>Motor Vehicle Access – Prohibited in Nature Reserves, Wildland Parks and Heritage Rangelands except for management activities or carrying out approved operations associated with a valid disposition or research permit. Within Natural Environment Parks and Recreation Areas, vehicles are restricted to public roads or limited management purposes or carrying out activities associated with a valid disposition or research permit, in areas not road accessible</p>	<p>Motor Vehicle Access – No change from current policy.</p>
<p>Off-Highway Vehicles and Snowmobiles – Prohibited in Wilderness Areas, Willmore Wilderness Park and Ecological Reserves. In Wildland Parks designated routes that existed at the time of establishment may be considered to ensure continuity of regional trail systems. In Provincial Parks and Recreation Areas, facilities may serve as staging areas for adjacent land provided there are no conflicts with other users and natural values are not compromised. Permitted in Natural Areas and in some Recreation Areas that have an OHV zone or designated OHV trails.</p>	<p>Off-Highway Vehicles and Snowmobiles – Prohibited in Nature Reserves. Permitted in Heritage Rangelands for management activities associated with a valid disposition. In some Natural Environment Parks staging areas may be used to provide snowmobile access to lakes or crown land outside the park. Prohibited in Wildland Parks except for new areas where use is already well established. In such circumstances a limited number of specific routes may be designated at the time of establishment. Permitted on designated trails in larger Recreation Areas</p>	<p>Off-Highway Vehicles and Snowmobiles – No significant change from the current policy except for possible designation of routes in Wildland Parks where use patterns are already well established.</p>

Current Management Guidelines	Proposed Management Guidelines	Change
Aircraft Landing – Prohibited in all classes except with written authorization for research or management purposes or in the case of emergencies.	Aircraft Landing – Prohibited in Nature Reserves, Natural Environment Parks and Heritage Rangelands except for emergencies, approved research and management or operations associated with and existing disposition. Floatplane access to designated lakes in some Wildland Parks may be permitted subject to the management plan. Helicopters and floatplanes may be permitted in Recreation Areas subject to the management plan. Airstrips are prohibited in all classes	Aircraft Landing – Permitted in Recreation Areas for recreation purposes subject to the management plan. Floatplanes access may be permitted to designated lakes in Wildland Provincial Parks, subject to the management plan.
Power Boating – Prohibited in Ecological Reserves, Wilderness Areas and Willmore Wilderness Park. Permitted in the other classes subject to boating restrictions under the Canada Shipping Act.	Power Boating – Prohibited in Nature Reserves. Permitted on rivers and lakes in Wildland Parks and Natural Environment Parks where the activity already occurs. Prohibited in Heritage Rangelands except as required for management or in emergencies. Permitted in Recreation Areas.	Power Boating – No significant policy change.
Commercial Tourism Facilities ¹ – Prohibited in Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas, Willmore Wilderness Park and Wildland Parks. May be permitted in Provincial Parks providing it is consistent with the primary intent of preserving the natural landscape. Permitted in Recreation Areas.	Commercial Tourism Facilities – Prohibited in Nature Reserves, Wildland Parks, and Heritage Rangelands. Restricted to existing developments within Natural Environment Parks. Permitted in Recreation Areas.	Commercial Tourism Facilities – Restricted to existing developments in Natural Environment Parks.
Outdoor Recreation Facilities – Prohibited in Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves. Restricted to trails, bridges and primitive facilities in Wildland Parks, Willmore Wilderness Park and Natural Areas. A wide range of facilities are permitted in Provincial Parks and Recreation Areas.	Outdoor Recreation Facilities – Prohibited in Nature Reserves. Limited to trails, trail bridges and backcountry campsites in Wildland Parks. Limited in Natural Environment Parks to those facilities that enhance heritage appreciation, recreation and tourism use associated with protection of the natural environment. A wide range of facilities will be permitted in Recreation Areas.	Outdoor Recreation Facilities – Clear separation of Natural Environment Parks and Recreation Areas will clarify the intent of these sites. No change for Wildland Parks or Nature Reserves. The range of recreation facilities available in Natural Environment Parks will be narrower than currently permitted in Provincial Parks while the range of facilities for Recreation Areas will be broadened.
Auto Access Campgrounds – Prohibited in Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Wildland Parks, Natural Areas and Willmore Wilderness Park. Permitted in Provincial Parks and Recreation Areas.	Auto Access Campgrounds – Prohibited in Nature Reserves and Heritage Rangelands. Prohibited in Wildland Parks except for staging areas, which must be on the perimeter. Permitted in Natural Environment Parks and Recreation Areas.	Auto Access Campgrounds – Provision for staging areas on the perimeter of Wildland Parks. Auto access camping will be prohibited in Heritage Rangelands.
Backcountry Camping – Prohibited in Ecological Reserves. Permitted in all other classes where land base is large enough. Restricted to designated areas in some classes. No facilities may be constructed in Wilderness Areas.	Backcountry Camping – Prohibited in Nature Reserves. May be permitted in all other classes subject to terms and conditions of the management plan.	Backcountry Camping – No change from current policy except that including the Wilderness Areas in the Wildland Park class may permit the construction of basic backcountry campsites and trail improvements if warranted.
Horse Use – Prohibited in Wilderness Areas. Recreational use is discouraged in Ecological Reserves. Permitted in Willmore Wilderness Park, Wildland Parks and Natural Areas. Permitted in designated areas or on designated trails in Provincial Parks and Recreation Areas.	Horse Use – Prohibited in Nature Reserves. Permitted in Wildland Parks where use patterns are established at the time of designation. Permitted in the other classes subject to terms and conditions as set out in management plans. Encouraged for management of cattle in Heritage Rangelands.	Horse Use – Prohibition in Nature Reserves will be accommodated by moving Ecological Reserves with grazing to the Heritage Rangeland class.

¹ **Commercial Tourism Facilities** include hotels or motels, RV parks, golf courses, downhill ski areas, heli-skiing operations, or similar types of development. It does not include rustic fixed roof accommodation such as a rustic hostel, backcountry hut, or similar facilities.

Current Management Guidelines	Proposed Management Guidelines	Change
Hunting – Prohibited in Wilderness Areas. Permitted in Ecological Reserves and Provincial Parks only where required to control wildlife populations. Permitted in Natural Areas, Wildland Parks, Willmore Wilderness Park and Recreation Areas.	Hunting – Prohibited in Nature Reserves. Permitted in Natural Environment Parks as required for management purposes to control problem wildlife populations. Permitted in Wildland Parks where hunting occurs at the time of designation. Permitted in Heritage Rangelands and Recreation Areas subject to guidelines in the management plan.	Hunting – No change from current policy.
Fishing – Prohibited in Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves. Permitted in the other classes.	Fishing – Prohibited in Nature Reserves. Permitted in Wildland Parks that are open to fishing at the time of establishment. Permitted in the other classes.	Fishing – No change
Trapping – Prohibited in Wilderness Areas. Prohibited in Ecological Reserves and Provincial Parks except as required for management purposes. Pre-existing traplines are phased out in these areas. Permitted in Wildland Parks, Willmore Wilderness Park, Natural Areas and Recreation Areas.	Trapping – Prohibited in Nature Reserves. Prohibited in Natural Environment Parks except as required for management purposes. Permitted to continue in Wildland Parks where it occurs at the time of establishment subject to the management plan. Permitted in Heritage Rangelands and Recreation Areas subject to the management plan	Trapping – No change from current policy.
Cycling, Mountain Biking – Prohibited in Wilderness Areas and Willmore Wilderness Park. Generally restricted to roads and designated trails in Provincial Parks. Cycling may be permitted on routes as specified in the management plan in Ecological Reserves, Wildland Parks and Provincial Parks. Permitted in Natural Areas and Recreation Areas.	Cycling, Mountain Biking – Prohibited in Nature Reserves. May be permitted on specific routes in Wildland Parks where use is already well established at the time of designation. Restricted to roads and designated trails in Natural Environment Parks. May be permitted in Wildland Parks and Heritage Rangelands subject to the management plan. Permitted in Recreation Areas.	Cycling, Mountain Biking – Prohibited in Nature Reserves.
Management Activities – The use of motor vehicles, horses, off-highway vehicles, snowmobiles, aircraft, etc., is permitted in all classes for work related to resource protection and monitoring, environmental research, visitor management, public safety and search and rescue or other emergencies; forest and range protection, vegetation management, general management and enforcement activities carried out by or on behalf of the Province.	Management Activities – Use of motorized vehicles and other conveyances by Department staff or others completing work on behalf of the Province would continue in all classes.	Management Activities – No change from current policy.