

Parks Environmental Field Report

The Parks Environmental Field Report is a supporting document in the application process for industrial, commercial and recreational activities within sites administered under the *Provincial Parks Act*. The intent of this document is to inform Park staff on the condition of the land at the time of application, during the lifetime of the activity, and what might be expected from identified commitments during the reclamation phase. An Environmental Field Report will be required for all new applications for:

- Wellsites and associated facilities
- Pipelines and associated facilities
- Access roads
- Easements
- Commercial recreation facilities
- Non-profit recreation facilities
- Dispositions not noted above will be assessed on an individual basis

An Environmental Field Report will not be required for:

- Cottage lots
- Trapper's cabins

PROCESS

The first step in the approval process conducted by Park staff, is to determine whether or not the activity can be considered as an existing commitment and if it can be accommodated without creating new ground disturbance. The following Information Letter from 2003 outlines the requirements of what constitutes an 'existing commitment' for all Oil & Gas activity.

Information Letter:

[IL-2003-25](#)

Other scenarios that might be considered existing commitments that are not related to the Oil & Gas sector may be declared if an activity preceded the establishment of the Protected Area. If an existing commitment is proven, then the client will be instructed to submit an application for the activity and Park staff will then determine what level of site assessment is warranted.

***First Nations Consultation**

Note: Parks Division follows the *Government of Alberta First Nations Consultation Policy on Land Management and Resource Development* and associated guidelines. Prior to the formal application, all proposals are also assessed by Parks Division to determine whether they may trigger First Nations Consultation. For more information please contact Park staff.

***Environmental Field Report**

Park staff will investigate all available information to determine the appropriate path that the Environment Field Report must follow. Factors that will influence the level of assessment are:

- amount and type of re-growth
- date of original or last disturbance
- quality of site information currently on file
- new policy / guidelines that would dictate new information needed for approval
- whether the site is in an area where there is the potential for pioneering rare plants or rare and sensitive wildlife species (see link for more information: ACIMS, FWMIS)

Based on the results of the above evaluation, proponents will be directed to follow either the simplified Track #1 route or the more detailed Track #2 as described below.

Track #1: activities located on **previously disturbed land**

An activity under Track #1 will require:

- 1) Site evaluations will be conducted by a qualified environmental assessment practitioner.
- 2) Site evaluations should occur in snow free conditions in order to accurately assess the current vegetative composition and health, including an inventory of invasive species.
- 3) Applicant must submit a *Historical Resources Act* clearance letter and / or impact assessment mitigation plan for any proposed ground disturbance. [Alberta Culture - Historic Resources Management - Archaeological Survey Section - Online Permitting and Clearance \(OPaC\)](#)
- 4) Applicant is expected to conduct and report on web based data searches such as:
 - a. FWMIS, [Alberta ESRD - FWMIS](#)
 - b. ACIMS, [Alberta Conservation Information Management System \(ACIMS\)](#)
 - c. Environmentally Significant Areas, [Environmentally Significant Areas \(ESAs\) Report](#)
 - d. Hydrography report including Fish & Fish Habitat, etc.
- 5) Applicant must be prepared to provide a weed management plan if deemed appropriate.
- 6) In addition to any site specific conditions imposed by the Parks, the development or activity will be expected to comply with standards and conditions as described in the [Government of Alberta Integrated Standards and Guidelines document](#).
<http://www.scotland.ca/wp-content/uploads/EAP-IntegratedStandardsGuide-Jun27-2012.pdf>
- 7) If First Nations Consultation was delegated to the proponent, the consultation adequacy decision must be attached to the application.

Track #2: activities located on **previously undisturbed land (any portion)**

Activities that fall under Track #2 are required to undergo a more detailed and thorough review. All of the expectations identified under the 1st track will apply along with these additional expectations:

- 8) Applicant must conduct a **Rare Plant Survey**. Survey the area at least twice during the growing season for vascular species. Surveys should be conducted (i) late spring/early summer & (ii) late summer/ early fall.
- 9) Soil classification and composition should be included on detailed map.
- 10) Topography and related land form structures should be included on detailed map including Environmentally Significant Areas (link to ESA).
- 11) Describe development and how any environmental impacts will be minimized or mitigated, i.e. pad construction details, interim and final reclamation expectations* (i.e. soil and brush pile handling – where? how?, size / shape of footprint, interim reclamation practices), timber salvaging.

**The reclamation plan must form a comprehensive part of the application from design through construction, operation and final reclamation. Discussion of innovative practices that minimize impacts and provide long term successful reclamation during operations and at project completion are encouraged by Parks Division.*

PROCESS SUMMARY

- Step 1. Proponent is to contact the Parks Land Use Technologist in Edmonton to discuss the project prior to preparing or submitting an application or an Environmental Field Report. At this time, the project will be assessed to determine if there is an existing commitment; if First Nations Consultation is required; whether the location can be altered to decrease impact to Park land and/or other details that may result in project modifications.
- Step 2. Proponent completes an Environmental Field Report following either Track identified above depending on nature of disturbance.
- Step 3. Completed Disposition Application and Environmental Field Report are submitted to Park staff who will review the report for thoroughness and accuracy. Deficiencies and information gaps will be communicated back to the proponent. Environmental Field Reports are expected to be completed in enough detail to provide thorough understanding of the project and expected level of disturbance.
- Step 4. Environmental Field Report will be vetted through the Regional Land Use Officer and Park Ecologist.
- Step 5. Proponent can now submit application for the activity. Application package is to be sent by hardcopy to the Disposition Management Branch in Edmonton and will include:
 - Application (2 signed originals)
 - Application Fees
 - Environmental Field Report **along with all relevant reports or clearances**
 - HRA Clearance letter
 - Detailed map of activity and area.
 - First Nations adequacy decision letter (if needed)