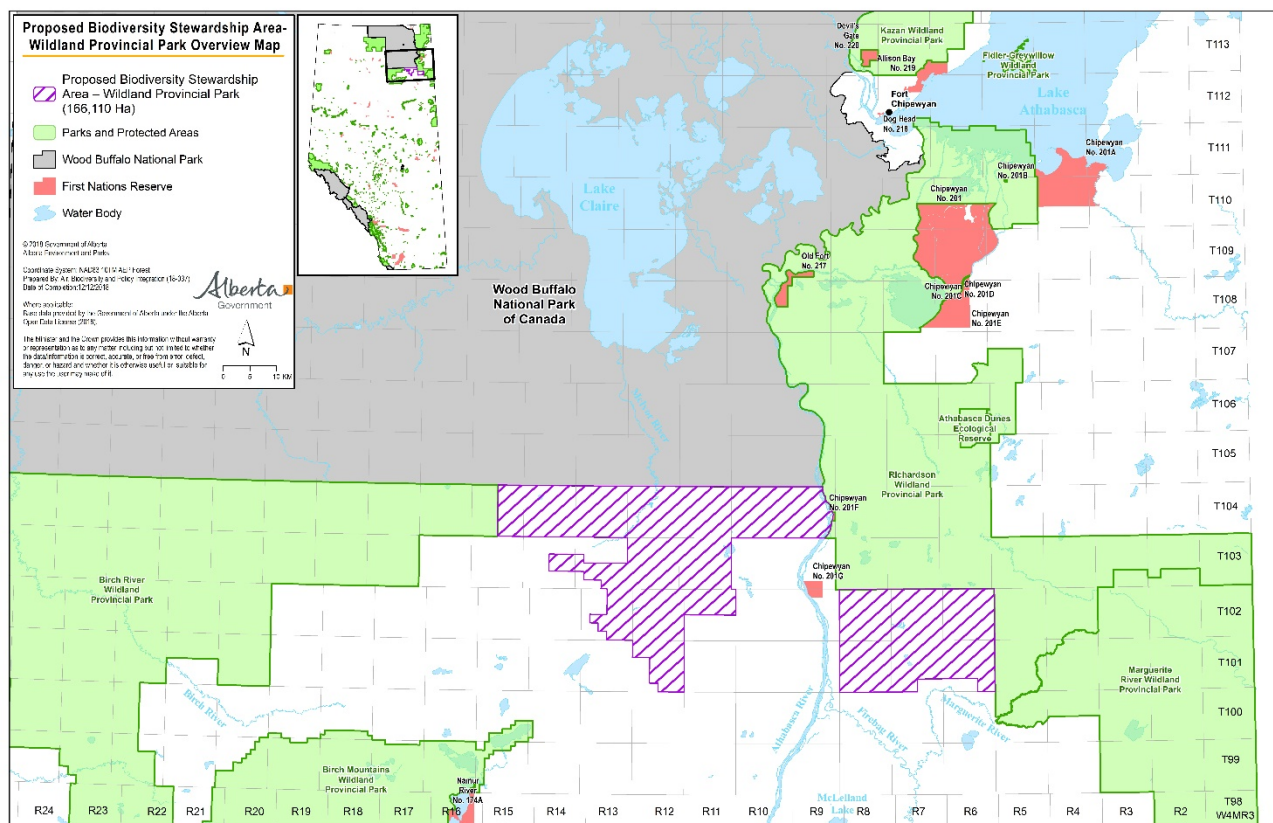


Proposed Biodiversity Stewardship Area - Wildland Provincial Park in the Lower Athabasca Region

Background and Map

Following months of collaborative discussions with Indigenous groups, industry and other stakeholders, the Government of Alberta is proposing to establish the Biodiversity Stewardship Area to be designated as a wildland provincial park (protected area). The proposed protected area is about 166,110 hectares located directly south of Wood Buffalo National Park. The designation would shift the current multiple-use area with existing forest and energy tenure into an area focused on the conservation of biodiversity.



Government is extending public consultation until February 24, 2019. We want to hear from all interested parties on the proposed protected area.

For more information and to provide input on this proposal, visit Albertaparks.ca.



Management Intent of the Proposed Biodiversity Stewardship Area - Wildland Provincial Park

Wildland provincial parks are intended to conserve nature and associated cultural features in a relatively undisturbed state. They also support backcountry and remote nature-based recreation opportunities, dependent on their compatibility with conservation outcomes.

The proposed protected area would increase protection of the Peace-Athabasca watershed. It would also increase connectivity between existing wildland provincial parks and the national park in the area, which is important to maintain ecological integrity and habitats for species at risk like woodland caribou.

The proposed protected area has been identified by Indigenous Peoples as having natural values and species, such as the Ronald Lake bison herd, that are important to support Indigenous People's rights, culture and well-being. The exercise of Treaty rights and traditional uses in the area would be supported in the proposed protected area and cooperative management opportunities would be available to interested Indigenous communities.

Nature-based recreation opportunities would be focused on remote backcountry experiences where visitors can experience solitude, challenge and personal interaction with nature. Facilities will be limited to trails and rustic backcountry campsites. Nature-based ecotourism or adventure tourism opportunities could be supported.

Current and Proposed Permitted Activities

Activity	Current Permitted Activities – Public Lands, Green Area	Proposed Permitted Activities – Wildland Provincial Park
Foot Access (hiking, snowshoeing, Nordic skiing, etc.)	Yes	Yes
Equestrian Use	Yes	Yes
Hunting	Yes	Yes
Fishing	Yes	Yes
Backcountry Camping	Yes	Yes
Off-highway Vehicle/Snowmobile Use	Yes	Yes – On existing trails
Trapping	Yes	Yes
Existing Petroleum and Natural Gas Commitments (Crown Owned)	Yes	Yes
New Petroleum and Natural Gas (Crown Owned)	Yes	Yes, but with no surface access
Fixed Roof Accommodation	Yes	Maybe – Non-auto access backcountry or fly-in lodges may be permitted if compatible with site values and objectives and restricted to backcountry facility zones
Helicopter/Float Plane Landing	Yes	Maybe – A permit for landing is required.
Auto Access Camping	Yes	No
Large Scale Tourism Development	Yes	No
Commercial Forestry	Yes	No
Coal, Metallic and Industrial Minerals (Crown Owned)	Yes	No

For more information and to provide input on this proposal, visit Albertaparks.ca.

What would these changes mean?

Recreation

The park would maintain its rustic, undeveloped character and enable high quality backcountry experiences. Recreation opportunities would focus on wilderness-oriented recreation experiences, hunting and fishing, and experiencing nature with few if any amenities. Facilities would be limited to trails and rustic backcountry campsites.

Backcountry Camping access would continue throughout the proposed wildland provincial park, including opportunities for 'random' camping or rustic camping experiences. Backcountry camping would be allowed in both designated areas and areas outside of a one kilometre buffer from potential designated areas. Non-auto access backcountry or fly-in lodges may be permitted if compatible with site values and objectives and restricted to backcountry facility zones.

Off-Highway Vehicle/Snowmobile use would continue to be allowed on existing trails. Equestrian use would be allowed within the proposed wildland provincial park.

Guiding and Outfitting

In the proposed wildland provincial park, tourism would be restricted to opportunities for nature-based touring, guiding and outfitting, ecotourism or adventure tourism trips such as hiking, wildlife viewing or trail riding.

Hunting, Trapping and Angling

The management and administration of hunting, trapping and angling would not change in the proposed wildland provincial park. Approval for trappers to access trap lines using trails not designated for OHV use would continue to be allowed through a permit, as is currently the case.

What impact would this proposal have on industry?

Existing petroleum and natural gas agreements would be honoured. New petroleum and natural gas activity would be supported, but with no surface access. Oil sands development, metallic and industrial minerals and coal would not be permitted. Commercial forestry would not be permitted; vegetation management for wildfire/insect, disease and ecological function would be permitted.