Title: Berland Smoky Integrated Planning Area – Direction for Access Development

Number: IL 2013-01

Branch: Resource Integration Planning Branch

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Purpose
This Information Letter (IL) addresses permissions and specific direction for arterial all-weather access applications within the Berland Smoky Integrated Planning Area. This IL also addresses other road classes that could be built in the planning area.

Background
An extensive integrated land management initiative for the Berland Smoky Integrated Planning Area is ongoing by representatives from energy and forestry industries, in consultation with the Environment and Parks (AEP). The result of this work to date is a network plan of primary and secondary corridors in the working landscape’s planning area.

This IL identifies arterial all-weather access corridors that support roads up to a Class I and II as defined by the Enhanced Approval Process (EAP) within the Berland Smoky Integrated Planning Area. The primary and secondary corridors that have been supported by AEP are identified on the attached maps.

This IL and related documents are posted on the AEP website, and can be found from aep.alberta.ca.

Expectations/Procedures

General
The implementation of this plan will require the use of either the Enhanced Approval Process (EAP) or the Environmental Field Report (EFR) process, as detailed below.

1. The Berland Smoky Integrated Planning Area covered by this IL is available on AEP’s website.

2. Application requests for Class I or II roads that are not identified on the attached maps, or that are outside the corridors identified on the attached maps, will be asked to seek alignment with the existing network plan. Any proposed changes to primary or secondary network plan must be supported by the Foothills Landscape Management Forum (FLMF) prior to submission of the proposed amended network plan to AEP.

3. AEP reserves the right to reject applications not in line with the network plan, without prior agreement from previous plan participants.

4. As policy direction emerges from the Alberta Government (e.g., Land-use Framework, Woodland Caribou Recovery Plan) or as new information becomes available from FLMF or other sources, this IL will be reviewed and modified as appropriate.

5. **Essential Process Requirements:** Routes permitted to be upgraded to a Class I or Class II road and/or permitted as new constructed Class I road or Class II road must follow the appropriate processes which include:

   - Environmental Field Report (EFR) – for upgrade of existing road to a Class I or Class II.
   - Enhanced Approval Process (EAP) – for new Class I or Class II construction.
   - First Nation Consultation Assessment Requests - a requirement for upgrades and new construction.

All documentation related to the above processes must be completed and submitted as per the processing channels. Instructions related to these processes are available from AEP’s website.
For additional information please contact AEP field staff listed below or contact AEP’s Land Disposition Services at (780) 427-3570.

**Primary Corridors**

6. Primary corridors are considered 1000 meters in width.

7. Primary corridors (existing and planned) identified on the attached map are permitted to be upgraded or constructed up to and including a Class I road as defined by the EAP Road Class Specifications.

8. Applications for new road construction by upstream oil and gas companies for industrial activities considered in scope must be submitted through the EAP. Applications for new construction by forest companies or for industrial activities considered out-of-scope as defined through EAP must be submitted through the EFR application process.

9. With respect to EAP applications, if all EAP Integrated Standards and Guidelines (with the exception of the roadclass) are followed within the primary corridors, these applications can be considered standard. Applications for new construction that do not follow EAP standards (with the exception of the road class) within the approved corridors must be considered non-standard.

10. Applications for existing roads that are permitted for upgrades are required to be submitted through the EFR application process (all applicants).

**Secondary Corridors**

11. Secondary corridors are considered 500 meters in width.

12. Existing roads within secondary corridors, as identified on the attached maps are permitted to be upgraded up to and including a Class II road as defined by the EAP Road Class Specifications.

13. Applications for permitted upgrades to existing roads are required to be submitted through the EFR application process (all applicants).

14. Planned secondary corridors within the Berland Smoky Integrated Planning boundary that fall outside the Little Smoky and A La Peche Caribou ranges, excluding route #565, are permitted for development of Class II roads in accordance with EAP Integrated Standards and Guidelines. With respect to EAP applications, these applications will be considered non-standard to enable engagement with AEP field officers on the best siting within the corridor.

15. Developments are urged to consider the identification of equivalent linear reclamation and/or restoration. Identified reclamation and/or restoration within the Berland Smoky Integrated Planning Area may be guided by the attached “Berland Smoky Network Plan: Proposed Priority Areas for Caribou Restoration” map and the “Berland Smoky Network Plan: Proposed Priority Areas for Restoration of Fish Populations and Habitats” map.

16. Within the Little Smoky and A La Peche caribou ranges new Class II roads in planned secondary corridors are deferred and existing roads for upgrade to Class II are not permitted as identified on the attached maps until the caribou range plans are completed and approved by the Government of Alberta.

17. Roads of a lower class (Class III, IV and V) proposed within the vicinity of deferred Class II corridors should be aligned as much as possible with the deferred corridors to minimize footprint.

18. AEP’s strategic First Nations Consultation is on-going. The results of this consultation may defer and/or affect the location of planned secondary corridors and/or existing road upgrades to EAP Class II. Consultation may also affect the reclamation/restoration of certain selected redundant roads.

**Contacts**

AEP staff can be contacted at the number below. To use the government’s toll-free RITE Line, dial 310-0000 and enter the desired phone number.

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Alberta Energy Regulator can be contacted at the number below.

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