

OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland Management Plan



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PREAMBLE

We invite Albertans to make a connection with the natural environment through our parks; to understand how we are part of a larger system – an ecosystem of living things. That connection is paramount to our survival. Our sustainability is a direct result of our ability to co-exist within a natural system.

By working together, Parks' staff, volunteers, stakeholders, partners and the public build a constituency of support for parks. We build a community of people connected to the natural world.

We believe in a set of values – a way of doing business that inspires people to discover, value, protect, and enjoy that natural world and the benefits it provides for current and future generations.

Parks within the Provincial Context

Alberta's prosperity has created opportunities for our economy and people, but it has also created challenges for Alberta's landscapes. Industrial activity, municipal development, infrastructure, recreation, and conservation interests often are competing to use the same piece of land. The competition between user groups creates conflict, and often puts stress on the finite capacity of our land, air, water, and habitat.

To resolve this conflict, the Government of Alberta developed the Land Use Framework (LUF). The purpose of the Land Use Framework is to manage growth, not stop it, and to sustain our growing economy, but balance this with Alberta's social and environmental goals. This is what the Land Use Framework is about – smart growth.

A key player in the management of growth is Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation as it has the responsibility for managing Alberta's provincial parks and for supporting tourism development. To ensure the management of parks aligns with the Government of Alberta's strategic direction, the *Plan for Parks* was drafted. It outlines key planning elements also found in the Land Use Framework, and both share the following desired outcomes:

- People-friendly communities and recreational opportunities
- Healthy ecosystems and environment
- Sustainable prosperity supported by our land and natural resources

The *Plan for Parks* also provides a foundation for decision making through a set of guiding principles. These guiding principles will help guide complex decision making where needs are diverse and sometimes competing.

The guiding principles are:

- Accountability
- Citizen Engagement
- Collaboration
- Continuous Improvement and Innovation
- Education
- Environmental Leadership
- Inclusion
- Integrated Management
- Knowledge-based Decision-making
- Respectful and Responsive
- Stewardship
- Sustainability

Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation will report to Albertans on progress that has been made towards the desired outcomes and milestones in the Ministry Annual Report. This way, Albertans will be able to track the environmental, social, and economic health of Alberta's parks system.

Regional planning under the Land Use Framework will address land use needs across the seven regions of the province. Regional plans developed under the Land Use Framework will provide broad direction to park plans at all scales – from regional parks plans to management plans for specific parks. Where appropriate, park management plans, such as this document, are completed at a smaller scale prescribing detailed direction for a site or group of related sites, but always within a broader provincial and regional context.

Working Together Toward a Common Vision

We also recognize that unless we manage the environment responsibly, the beautiful landscape we enjoy may cease to exist. Good environmental management positively impacts ecosystems found within park boundaries and the effect is felt throughout the province.

Alberta's *Plan for Parks* reaffirms that we must meet both objectives – recreation and conservation – within Alberta's parks system because they are inextricably linked.

The *Plan for Parks* includes the following vision:

Alberta's parks inspire people to discover, value, protect and enjoy the natural world and the benefits it provides for current and future generations.

Key to this vision is the role of Albertans, who will help create the recommendations that guide how their parks are managed.

Community Engagement is Integral to Our Success

The *Plan for Parks* reaffirms a commitment to engage Albertans to ensure informed decisions are made that are sensitive and responsive to public concerns and values. Consultation with our Aboriginal communities, stakeholder groups, partners, and the public is beneficial in planning and decision-making. It helps to identify and gain understanding of key issues; to help fully identify and assess the impacts of options; to ensure that all components of public involvement have been considered; and, to feed information into the decision-making process and to evaluate the results.

The Parks Division believes strongly that meaningful consultation is an essential component of community engagement. The partnerships and relationships developed and nurtured through community engagement are generally long-term and provide an effective assessment of park management.

Aboriginal consultation is a unique process because the Government of Alberta recognizes Aboriginal communities on a government-to-government basis. Consultation between the Parks Division and Aboriginal communities involves information sharing and ongoing relationship building with the objective to reduce or mitigate impacts on Treaty rights and traditional uses on lands administered by the Parks Division.

Community engagement and consultation will continue to be a critical aspect of park management planning processes.

OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland is a priority site

OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland is a significant site in the Alberta parks system and was chosen as a priority for management plan development.

Over thousands of years, Alberta's rangeland ecosystems, such as those in the OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland, have adapted to changes in climate and natural disturbance, especially from grazing by larger herbivores like bison, elk, and deer. The effect of native grazing on the landscape was not constant—it was influenced by predators, wildfire and climate. Modern day rangeland management practices seek to imitate the rhythms and patterns of this natural system.

OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland ensures the continuation of a ranching legacy that has stewarded land in southern Alberta for over a century. This management plan enables the stewardship of OH Ranch to continue.

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GLOSSARY

Alberta Energy – a provincial department that manages development of provincially owned energy and mineral resources by industry, including natural gas, conventional oil, oil sands, petrochemicals, electricity, coal and minerals, renewable energy (wind, bio-energy, solar, hydro, geothermal, etc.) and energy efficiency and conservation, in the interest of all Albertans

Alberta Environment – a provincial department that is a partner in protecting and enhancing Alberta’s natural environment, to ensure the continued enjoyment of a clean and healthy environment by all

Alberta Parks – refers to the division of Alberta Tourism, Parks, and Recreation responsible for preserving a network of parks that represent the diversity of the province’s natural and cultural heritage, while balancing protection, recreation, education, and heritage appreciation values

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) – a provincial department that ensures that Alberta’s lands, forests, fish and wildlife benefit present and future Albertans. SRD encourages balance and responsible use of Alberta’s natural resources through the application of leading practices in management, science and stewardship.

Animal Unit Month (AUM) – the amount of dry matter or forage that one animal unit (AU) requires for one month. The standard AU grazing animal is a 1,000 pound cow with or without an un-weaned calf up to six months old.

Conservation Easement – a voluntary agreement between a current private landowner, and all subsequent landowners, and a municipal agency or qualified not-for-profit corporation that applies stipulations to the land to ensure its protection (by restricting development, management or certain uses)

Freehold Mineral Rights – refers to the private ownership of minerals beneath the surface of a parcel of land, that are otherwise held by the Province of Alberta

Grazing Lease – a disposition (in the form of an agreement with individuals, corporations, or associations) granted by the Province of Alberta to allow grazing on public lands. The Government of Alberta requires grazing leaseholders to employ sustainable rangeland management practices

as the core component of their stewardship responsibilities. The objective of sustainable rangeland management is to maintain plant vigor, protect and build the soil, perpetuate the forage resource and ensure a stable flow of products and other societal benefits.

Heritage Rangeland – a classification of park, designated under the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas, and Heritage Rangelands Act*, which recognizes and legislatively protects Alberta’s ranching culture and the connection of ranching to the land

Land Stewardship – the practice of carefully and responsibly managing land uses to ensure natural systems are maintained or enhanced for future generations.

Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) – a private, non-profit group that partners with corporate and individual landowners to achieve the direct protection of important natural treasures through land donation, purchase and conservation easement

OH Ranch – One of the oldest ranches in south western Alberta, with four operating ranches, OH Pekisko, OH Longview, OH Dorothy, and OH Bassano, which raise cattle using traditional ranching techniques

Southern Alberta Land Trust Society (SALTS) – a locally-based, rancher-driven, nonprofit organization with registered charity status, dedicated to preserving the ecological, productive, scenic and cultural values of Alberta's Eastern Slopes, prairie and foothill regions



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 **PURPOSE OF THIS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

This document provides a framework for the overall management of OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland for a ten-year period commencing on the approval date of this plan. This management plan and the direction it contains applies to the public land within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland (See Figure 1). This document has been developed in coordination and consultation with all of the partners involved in OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland management. Management direction specific to the private land under conservation easement is contained in the approved conservation easement agreements registered on the title of those lands. The management direction for the private land under conservation easement agreements was developed to be complimentary and consistent with the management direction of this management plan. This allows for the continuation of the management of the entire land base as one contiguous unit.

This management plan was developed using the standard plan development process of Alberta Parks. The steps of management planning are plan development, plan review, approval, implementation, and review. During plan development, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation (Alberta Parks), Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and Alberta Energy worked closely together to provide the information contained in this plan. The plan was then reviewed by the Government of Alberta and released to all Albertans for their review. Parks, which heritage rangelands are a classification of, are a public trust and the public review of this management plan is an important step to ensure that the public agrees with management direction for this site. Opportunities for input from the general public, interest groups, tenure holders, First Nations, resource industries, and municipalities were given during the development of this management plan. Feedback and comment received during those review opportunities was important in developing this plan which has been approved by the Government of Alberta. The approved OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland Management Plan will guide management of the land base and will be reviewed on a 10-year cycle. The 10-year review cycle allows for a review of overall management strategies and for public comment on those that have been occurring on and are applicable to the public land designated as Heritage Rangeland. Amendments to the management plan can occur prior to the 10-year review, if deemed appropriate by Alberta Parks and SRD. Plan amendments that change existing management direction will require a consultation component for the general public, interest groups, tenure holders, First Nations, resource industries, and municipalities.

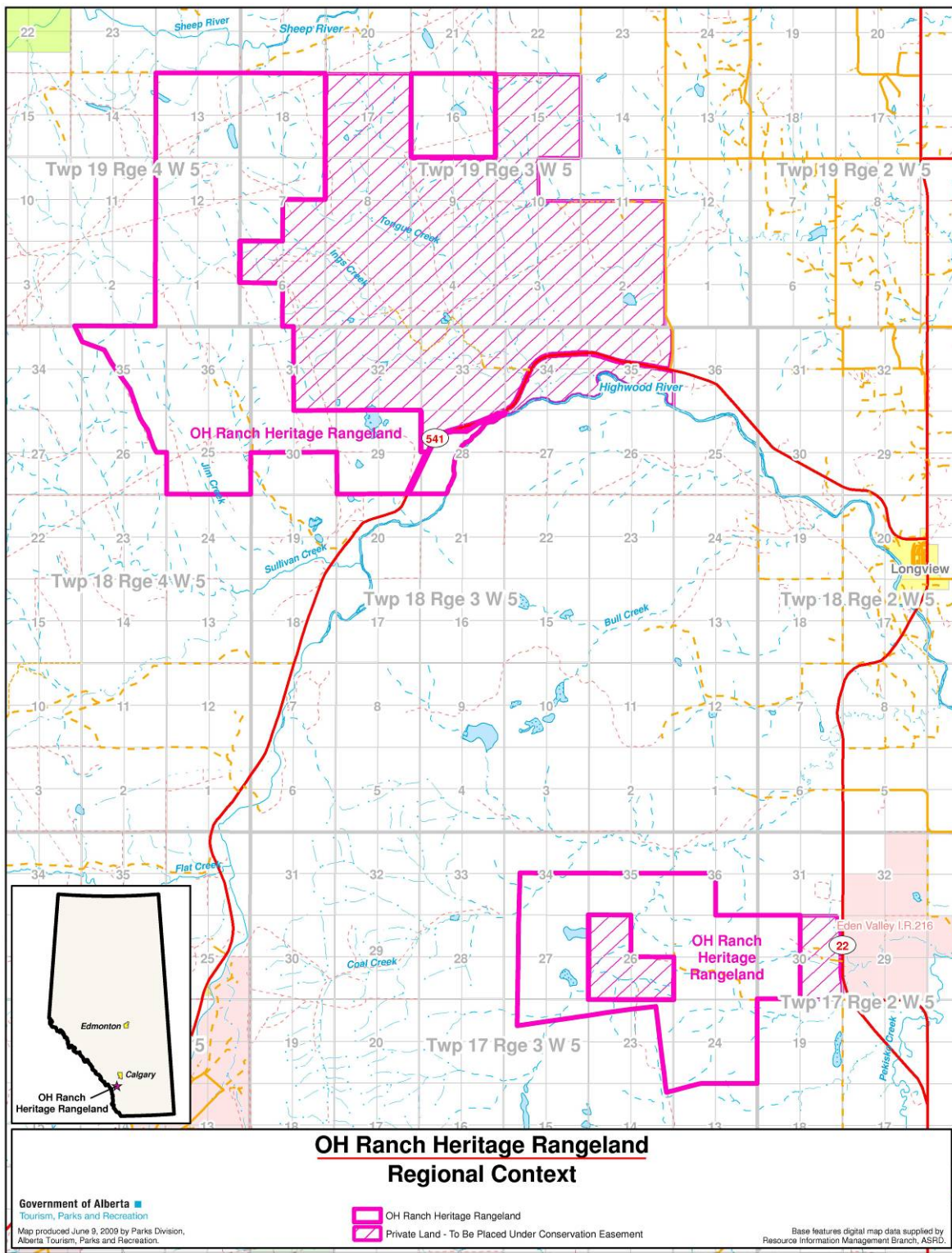


Figure 1: OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland - Regional Context

The approved OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland Management is applicable to the public land designated as Heritage Rangeland. Specific direction for the management of the private land under conservation easement is contained in the approved conservation easement agreements registered on the title of those lands. The public land and private land will continue to be managed as one cohesive unit.

This plan consolidates information from current, applicable legislation, policy, direction, and management practices for the Heritage Rangeland and existing activities on the land base. It ensures that range management and grazing practices, which have been present for 125 years, will continue and that land stewardship will remain a key component of those activities. This management plan also consolidates existing management direction on a variety of other resource activities, such as industrial resource development, water resources, wildlife, vegetation, recreation use, and many others.

In each section there is a brief summary of the existing, known resources and identified information gaps. Specific management actions related to resource topics and objectives are included in a table at the end of each section.

1.2 WORKING TOGETHER

Alberta Tourism, Parks, and Recreation (Alberta Parks), Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD), Alberta Energy, the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), Southern Alberta Land Trust Society (SALTS), and the OH Ranch will work together to manage the land base. Alberta Parks and SRD will continue to provide administration and monitoring for the public land designated as Heritage Rangeland. The NCC and SALTS will provide administrative and monitoring for the private land under conservation easement. The OH Ranch will continue to actively manage the land through their ranching operations. The OH Ranch has a long history of established grazing practices, and under the Heritage Rangeland designation, these practices will be an aspect of managing the Heritage Rangeland. The grazing leases on the public land in OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland have been managed and administered by, and will continue to be managed and administered by, SRD.

In association with the public land designated as Heritage Rangeland, the private land on the ranch has been placed under conservation easement. The Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Southern Alberta Land Trust Society, the holders of the conservation easements on the private land, will be a partner in the management of this aspect of the Heritage Rangeland.

1.3 BACKGROUND

OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland is located near the village of Longview, southwest of the City of Calgary (Figure 1). This Heritage Rangeland contributes to the protection of the significant ranching history and native grassland characteristics of the area.

This project is a result of the cooperation between several government agencies and the OH Ranch. Originally, OH Ranch Ltd. explored placing a conservation

easement on the deeded portions of their ranch to conserve the unique ecosystems represented on the ranches. To aid in moving forward on the conservation easement, a report on the ecologically sensitive landscape for each ranch was completed in 2007 by Environment Canada. The recommendation of this report was that the ecologically sensitive ecosystems required large contiguous land bases to remain intact. In order to enhance the ecological viability, the conservation easement would be better done in concert with conservation measures on the adjacent public land. OH Ranch Ltd. approached the Government of Alberta to explore options for conservation of the public land.

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD), Alberta Environment, Alberta Energy, and Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation (TPR) recognized the importance of the Longview and Pekisko areas of the OH Ranch in maintaining native grasslands and the traditional ranching operations. Therefore, to compliment the conservation easement proposal for the deeded lands, the Government of Alberta proposed the designation of the public land within the Longview and Pekisko sections of the OH Ranch as heritage rangeland (including the grazing leases issued to the OH Ranch and Winter Range Inc.).

This was a unique opportunity as it is a large land base (with at least 50% being private land); there is a long history (125 years) of common management on the private and public land; and it fit within the Government of Alberta's protected area needs.

1.4 ALBERTA'S PROVINCIAL PARKS SYSTEM

The strategic direction for Alberta's provincial parks system, *Alberta's Plan for Parks (Plan for Parks)*, acknowledges the interconnectedness between the environmental, societal, and economic values of parks to the people of Alberta. It also recognizes parks as being important to the quality of life Albertans enjoy and that responsible management of our parks is essential to ensure that parks support a high quality of life for current and future generations.

1.4.1 The Vision for Parks

The *Plan for Parks* established a new vision for the parks system. This vision illustrates the need to balance recreation and conservation, as they are inextricably linked.

The vision for the provincial parks system is:

Alberta's parks inspire people to discover, value, protect and enjoy the natural world and the benefits it provides for current and future generations.

1.4.2 The Desired Outcomes of Parks

Specific management objectives and actions that are presented in park management plans are intended to guide the present and future management and operation of parks. These specific objectives and actions are framed within the broad desired outcomes of the parks system.

There are three desired outcomes for the provincial parks system.

- People friendly communities and recreational opportunities
- Healthy ecosystems and environment
- Sustainable prosperity supported by our land and natural resources

These three desired outcomes are not ranked by priority. They are interrelated and must be achieved together to meet the expectations of Albertans.

Similar to parks organizations across Canada and the world, Alberta Parks adopted four high-level program goals that address the important role of parks in the conservation of biodiversity, outdoor recreation, environmental education, and tourism.

The four program goals span the breadth of the Alberta Parks program, and similar to the desired outcomes, balance in the delivery of these goals through management objectives and actions, provides balance across the entire parks system.

The goals used to frame management objectives and actions for program delivery in park management plans are:

Conservation & Protection – Parks conserve Alberta’s natural heritage and associated cultural heritage for current and future generations.

Outdoor Recreation & Healthy Living – Parks provide diverse, enjoyable outdoor recreation opportunities that contribute to healthy lifestyles.

Learning & Engagement – Parks offer an opportunity to learn about, appreciate and care for Alberta’s natural and cultural heritage.

Tourism & Community – Parks foster sustainable, nature-based experiences for Albertans and visitors that contribute to the economic and social fabric of Alberta.

1.4.3 The Natural Regions Framework

One of the main purposes of the Alberta parks system is to preserve the natural landscapes, features and processes that represent the province's environmental diversity. In Alberta, the Natural Regions Framework describes that environmental diversity.

The Natural Regions Framework is a landscape classification hierarchy that identifies landscape types based on natural characteristics including: landform, hydrology, climate, geology, soils, and vegetation.

Alberta is divided into six Natural Regions: Boreal Forest, Rocky Mountain, Foothills, Canadian Shield, Parkland, and Grassland. Each Natural Region is subdivided into several Subregions. OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland is located within the Rocky Mountain and Parkland Grassland Natural Regions. More specifically, it is located within the Foothills Parkland, Foothills Fescue, and Montane Natural Subregions. (Figure 2)

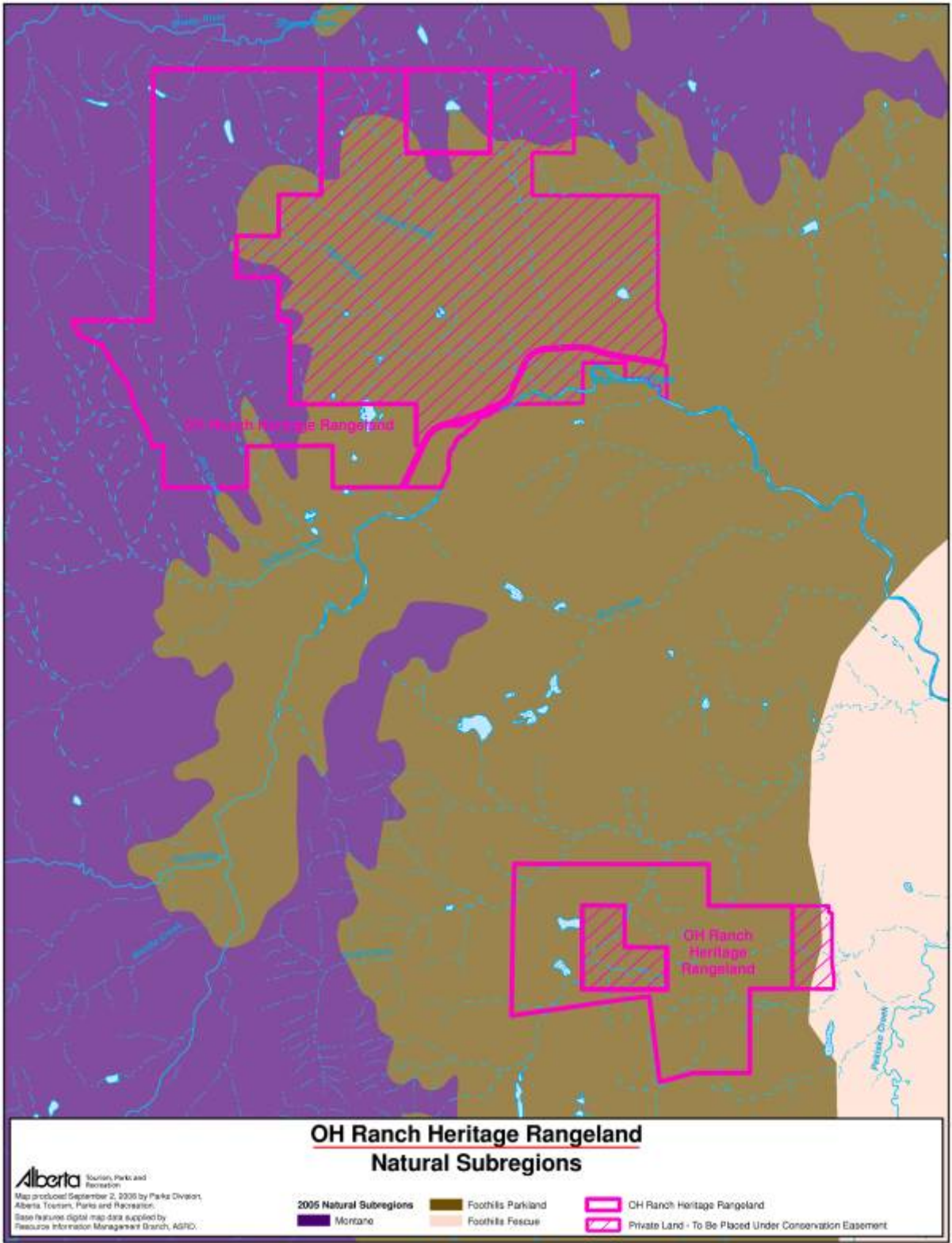


Figure 2: OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland - Natural Subregions

The Foothills Fescue Subregion is represented by high elevation, rough fescue and herb rich grassland plant communities found on black chernozemic soils. This Subregion has been significantly modified by land use practices and approximately 16% of this Subregion remains in a native landscape state.

The Fescue Parkland Subregion is defined by rolling to hilly native grasslands on southerly slopes, aspen woodlands or willow shrublands in low-lying areas or on northerly slopes, and hay lands on undulating to rolling terrain. Summers are cooler, resulting in a shorter growing season, however often have warmer, wetter winters than other parkland Subregions.

The Montane Subregion occurs at lower elevations along the Front Ranges of the Rocky Mountains. Summers in this Subregion are cool, but winters tend to be warmer than almost anywhere else in Alberta. Lodgepole pine, Douglas fir, and aspen stands occur on easterly and northerly aspects and grasslands on southerly and westerly aspects at lower elevations. Closed mixedwood and coniferous forests dominated by Lodgepole pine occur at higher elevations.

1.4.4 OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland Site Significance Statement

OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland celebrates Alberta's ranching culture, and ensures the continuation of a ranching legacy that has stewarded rare and sensitive native prairies in southern Alberta for generations.

1.5 PARK CLASSIFICATION

This Heritage Rangeland is classified within the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas, and Heritage Rangelands Act*. **Heritage Rangelands** preserve and protect natural features that are representative of Alberta's prairies. The primary management objective of Heritage Rangelands is to sustain native rangelands, by maintaining grassland ecology, through the use of grazing.

Characteristics of heritage rangelands include:

- Carefully managed livestock grazing maintains the ecological integrity of very large tracts of the continent's finest remaining prairie ecosystems.
- Heritage rangelands ensure ongoing environmental protection while continuing the traditional grazing approach that has preserved these grasslands for so many years.
- Outdoor recreation is not a priority of Heritage Rangelands. Limited opportunities for outdoor recreation may be provided, however these must be compatible with preservation of ecological values and grazing management.
- Recreational access to lands under grazing lease is governed by the Recreational Access Regulations. Contact must be made to the leaseholder (or their designate) prior to recreational access.
- Heritage Rangelands are designated under the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas and Heritage Rangelands Act (WAERNAHR Act)*.

1.6 THE MANAGEMENT INTENT FOR OH RANCH HERITAGE RANGELAND

This Heritage Rangeland will be managed in accordance with the legislation, policies, direction, and management practices that are currently applicable to the public lands.

The legislation, policies, and direction that are applicable to land within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland are, but not limited to, the:

- *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas and Heritage Rangelands Act (WAERNAHR Act)*
- *Mines & Minerals Act*
 - Information Letter 2003-25: Government of Alberta: Honouring Existing Mineral Commitments in Legislated Provincial Protected Areas
 - Information Letter 2002-01: Principles for Minimizing Surface Disturbance in Native Prairie and Parkland Areas
- *Surface Rights Act*
- *Public Lands Act*
 - Recreational Access Regulations
 - Disposition and Fees Regulation
- *Grazing Lease Stewardship Code of Practice*
- *Wildlife Act*
 - Hunting Regulations
 - Fishing Regulations
 - Trapping Regulations
- *Water Act*
- *Forest & Prairie Protection Act*
- *Environmental Protection & Enhancement Act (EPEA)*
- *Historical Resources Act*
- *Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act*
- *Weed Act*
- *Fisheries Act (Alberta)*
- *Navigable Waters Act (federal)*
- *Fisheries Act (federal)*

1.6.1 Management Vision

OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland will be managed to maintain and preserve its unique heritage, culture, and biodiversity for future generations.

This broad management vision recognizes the importance of the ranching heritage of the area and its significance to ensure the perpetuation of the grassland ecology of the area. The grazing leases and the private land under conservation easement will be managed as one unit to ensure the continuation of the land management used in the past. The OH Ranch has demonstrated stewardship and management towards sustaining natural landscape values, thereby ensuring the area's ongoing ecological integrity.

Activities that conflict with the management vision and the preservation or grazing activity within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland will not be permitted. Non-conforming land uses that will not be permitted on the public land designated within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland are:

- Commercial logging
- Facility development to support tourism and recreation
- Services and facilities
- New public road development
- New cultivation of land for agricultural purposes

Although minimal industrial activity on the public and private land within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland has occurred to date, existing mineral right commitments will be honoured. Existing mineral commitments are as defined by any tenure, disposition, right, agreement or approval that existed prior to the Heritage Rangeland designation. Honoring these commitments includes all activities, subsurface and surface, needed to win, work, and recover the mineral resource defined in the existing mineral commitment. Considering the primary purpose of the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas, and Heritage Rangelands Act* is to protect this Heritage Rangeland, special care must be taken when exploring, working and recovering the mineral resource in order to minimize impacts of activities on the natural landscape, wildlife, fish and vegetation.

The designation of the Heritage Rangeland does not prohibit new mineral right agreements. Any new mineral agreements will be issued with 'no surface access' restrictions to prevent surface disturbances within the Heritage Rangeland. Access for exploration related to any new mineral agreements issued after designation will not be permitted. 'No surface access' restrictions will be applied to all future mineral rights agreements on the public and private land within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland.

Management direction specific to the private land under conservation easement is contained in the approved conservation easement agreements registered on the title of those lands. The management direction for the private land under conservation easement agreements was developed to be complimentary and consistent with the management direction of this management plan. This allows for the continuation of the management of the entire land base as one contiguous unit. It is recognized the OH Ranch has existed based on livestock production, and it is assumed that livestock grazing and production will continue. However, it is also recognized that in order to supplement the livelihood of OH Ranch, activities on the private land under conservation easement, that are not necessarily in keeping with those acceptable on public land, may have to occur. Economic development opportunities, including eco-tourism type businesses such as guest ranching, outfitting, trail riding, or others that do not adversely impact the ecological integrity of the land base, can be developed by OH Ranch on the private land under conservation easement. Development of facilities required for these activities will be contained to the private land under conservation easement. Any commercial recreation activity occurring on the public land under Heritage Rangeland designation will be reviewed by Alberta Parks and SRD prior to the activity occurring and require a proper permit issued by Alberta Parks.

Appendix A includes a permitted uses table appropriate for the public land within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland.

1.6.2 Guiding Principles for Management

The following management principles will guide decision making in OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland.

Adaptive Management – Adaptive management is a process that recognizes that the future cannot be predicted perfectly. In response to imperfect situations, planning and management is modified as better information becomes available. Adaptive management is the application of a science based approach; meaning management decisions are informed by good advice and based on rigorous, fact-based knowledge. Monitoring is a critical component of the adaptive management approach. Monitoring is the process of checking, observing, and measuring outcomes for key variable or specific ecological phenomena against a predefined quantitative objective or standard. The information gathered during monitoring feeds into the adaptive management process to amend management direction, if needed. Input from affected stakeholders and land managers will be sought during adaptive management processes.

Shared Stewardship – Shared stewardship implies a collaborative approach among land managers and users in managing and caring for the land and its resources so that they can be passed onto future generations intact. Shared stewardship requires that government agencies – having a legislated mandate for land and resource management – work cooperatively with disposition holders, resource users, and interest groups to achieve common stewardship goals.

Responsible Stewardship – Responsible stewardship is a willing commitment of user groups to conduct themselves, and carry out their activities, in a manner that prevents unacceptable environmental degradation and which maintains fully functioning ecosystems at all levels (fine to large scale). Users of the Heritage Rangeland are encouraged to share with government agencies any information that will assist in managing the natural environment, human activities, and the resource values which are found within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland.

Ecosystem Management – Ecosystem management requires an understanding of the processes by which natural systems sustain themselves and that management actions emulate natural processes so as to maintain healthy, dynamic, and diverse ecosystems.

Precautionary Principle – Caution will be exercised whenever uncertainty exists about the consequences of intended management actions or when the effect of land uses and resource-based activities are not known.

1.7 REGIONAL CONTEXT

OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland consists of two separate parcels of land (Figure 1).

The Longview section is 7,128 acres of public land (designated as Heritage Rangeland) and 9,540 acres of private land (placed under conservation easement) for a total size of 16,620 acres. The Longview section has one grazing lease issued to OH Ranch Ltd.

The Pekisko section includes two grazing leases on public land, issued to OH Ranch and Winter Range Inc. The OH Ranch grazing lease contains 320 acres and the Winter Range Inc. grazing lease contains 2,989 acres (the leases are public land designated as heritage rangeland) and 800 acres of private land (placed under conservation easement), for a total area of 4,109 acres.

While the Heritage Rangeland designation only applies to the public land, it is agreed that the OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland title applies to both the public land and the private land, as these parcels of land have been managed as one cohesive unit (with the public land under grazing lease) since the establishment of the ranch. Existing buildings and approximately 40 acres of private land not used for ranch operations on the Pekisko block will not be included in the conservation easement.

The Longview ranch is located west of the village of Longview (southwest of the City of Calgary) within the Municipal District of Foothills No. 31. The Pekisko ranch is located south of the village of Longview and west of Highway 22. The Pekisko ranch is also located within the MD of Foothills No. 31.

1.8 SITE HISTORY

The Longview and Pekisko ranches are some of the oldest ranches in Alberta. The Longview ranch has the historic OH Ranch, which is celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2008. The Pekisko ranch was once a part of the historic Bar U Ranch.

The Longview ranch is the headquarters for the entire OH Ranch. The OH Ranch has operations at four different locations: Longview, Pekisko, Dorothy, and Bassano. The Longview and Pekisko ranches are managed together. The Dorothy and Bassano ranches (which are not included in this Heritage Rangeland designation or conservation easement) are managed separately. The OH Ranch manages these four separate land holdings to complete their cattle breeding program.

Since 1987, a vigorous program to upgrade the ranch has been undertaken, as well as maintaining and preserving the history of the operation. The North West Mounted Police Station has been reconstructed, as the original was destroyed by fire in 1962. The cookhouse, which was originally constructed by the Ings in the 1800's has also been restored to its original status.

An important aspect of the OH Ranch history is the continuation of traditional ranching methods. Cowboys continue to ride the range, moving cattle and doctoring sick animals in the open field by roping them from horseback. While modern equipment is available, horses remain the primary mode of transportation on the ranch.

The public land portions of the Longview and Pekisko sections of the OH Ranch were designated as Heritage Rangeland under the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas, and Heritage Rangelands Act* in the summer of 2008. The private land holdings of the Longview and Pekisko sections of the OH Ranch were officially placed under conservation easements in early 2009. The public land and private land will continue to be managed as an operating ranch to conserve the native grassland ecosystems.

Table 1: History of OH Ranch

1881	Lafayette French and Orville Hawkins Smith begin ranching at the Longview area and register the OH brand. The OH brand was derived from Orville Hawkins initials.
1883	French and Smith sell the brand and cattle to Frederick Ings, which marked the official recognition of the ranch. The ranch was named Rio Alto Ranch.
1890	A North West Mounted Police post cabin was constructed on the main headquarters of the ranch (Longview section).
1900	The OH brand was officially transferred to Walter Ings.
1918	The ranch, cattle, and OH brand are sold to Pat Burns who then sold it to Mayer & Lage Steamship Company.
1938	Pat Burns regains control of the ranch and OH brand
1950	Kirk Roenisch and Bill Arden purchase the ranch and officially rename the ranch OH Ranch Ltd.
1962	Clinton Roenisch Jr. and Douglas Kingsford purchased the ranch. They sold the ranch to OH Ranch (1961) Ltd., a company owned by A. D. Kingsford and H.C. Sheppard in 1962.
1987	D.K. Seaman purchases the ranch, entire cattle herd, and the OH brand. The OH Ranch has not changed ownership since 1987.
2008	Public land under existing grazing leases of OH Ranch is designated as Heritage Rangeland.
2009	Private land sections of Longview and Pekisko are placed under conservation easement.

2.0 CONSERVATION & PROTECTION



2.1 NATURAL RESOURCES

The area of OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland has soils and geology unique to the Natural Subregions in which it is situated. The majority of the Longview and Pekisko ranches have Thick Orthic Black Chernozemic soils, developed mainly on blankets of glacial till or fine textured glaciolacustrine sediments. Regosolic soils are frequent in drainage areas and on erosion prone slopes with bedrock outcrops exposed at or near the surface. The Thick Black Chernozems are the dominant soils under grasslands, whereas Dark Gray Chernozems are more prevalent on higher elevations and occur under forest cover. (Gramineae 2008)

The grasslands found within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland have developed under a history of grazing and natural fire. Grazing by bison (*Bison bison*), and other indigenous grazers, historically maintained the grasslands. Domestic grazing has since replaced the historic grazing activity and natural disturbance, such as fire.

2.1.1 Vegetation

OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland contains areas of intact communities of Alberta's provincial grass *Rough Fescue* and supports plants species adapted to a variety of climatic, biotic and abiotic conditions. This diversity of vegetation reflects the range of geological, climatic, and biotic conditions found at each property, as well as the history of land management activities.

Grasslands, aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) dominated forests, and willow (*Salix sp.*) shrublands occur within the Foothills Parkland Subregion of the Longview property, while lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) and white spruce (*Picea glauca*) dominated forests occur in the Montane Natural Subregion of the Longview property. A portion of the eastern Pekisko block lies within the Foothills Fescue Natural Subregion. Both properties support a mixture of both native and introduced grassland communities.

Grasslands dominate the majority of both properties. Despite the presence of some non-native species and seeded pasture communities, OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland supports a large area of native grassland. This large area of grassland is likely the best example of native grassland in the Calgary region, and possibly one of the best representatives of Foothills Parkland grassland communities in all of Alberta (Lamoureux et al. 1983).

Seeded pastures are dominated by smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), cicer milk-vetch (*Astragalus cicer*), creeping red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), and meadow brome (*Bromus commutatus*).

An Ecological Range Site Classification was conducted for both properties (Gramineae 2008). Although not comprehensive, the classification provides information on the nature and extent of the dominant plant community types for each site. A total of 39 community types were identified and mapped for OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland. Only two community types occurred on both properties. The Longview property has the greatest diversity of community types (with 34 types identified and mapped in total), with the Pekisko property supporting only 10 different community types. A list of all mapped plant communities is provided in Appendix B.

In the future, additional enhanced plant surveys may be done by qualified personnel to supplement previous work.

2.1.1.1 *Vegetation - Management Objectives and Actions*

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
<p>To manage the landscape, in correlation with ongoing grazing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanical cutting, prescribed burns, adjustments to livestock management, stocking rates, grazing times, etc. may be used where appropriate for the purposes of habitat diversifications, range management, fire fuel reduction, and silvicultural treatment. • Cultivation of native plant communities to prepare soil for raising annual and/or forage crops will not be permitted. • Currently cultivated land can continue to be cultivated and seeded within the existing footprint. New cultivation outside of existing footprints is not permitted.
<p>To promote the restoration and continuation of the native grassland ecology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain natural cover and habitats within the context of a large, contiguous land base so that wildlife populations and plant species diversity can be sustained. • New cultivation, breaking, or other destruction of native plant communities and vegetation including grasslands, parklands, forests, or wetlands will not be permitted. • Maintain road-less areas. • Complete biophysical inventories and rare plant inventories, with ground truthing, to provide baseline data for future management, monitoring and protection programs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration and reclamation of disturbed lands may require reseeding or replanting where natural regeneration has not been successful. Any reclamation will be completed with native plant materials obtained in the same area, wherever possible and be guaranteed as being a weed free seed mix. • Encroachment of trees and shrubs onto native grasslands may be controlled. Encroachment control will be ongoing and, where possible, will remove trees and shrubs at an early stage to minimize impacts. Prescribed burning (under an approved prescribed burn plan), livestock stocking rates and mechanical cutting will be the preferred methods of encroachment control. • All wildfires will be suppressed – the practice of using small wildfires to burn as an alternative to prescribed burns will not be allowed. • Prescribed burns approved for resource management purposes, such as to promote native grasslands or to control encroachment, will only be conducted under ideal weather conditions and pursuant to a prescribed burn plan.
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2.1.2 Insects, Pathogens & Invasive Species

Any natural system can be susceptible to insects and pathogens. Limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*), which is present in the Longview parcel of the Heritage Rangeland, is currently under threat from mountain pine beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*) and white pine blister rust (*Cronartium rubicola*). Alberta Parks is currently undertaking an inventory of stands within parks to determine the extent and health of limber pine stands. Projections of long-term trends in the health of these populations suggest that limber pine could be gone from a large portion of the Alberta landscape within 100 years. Currently, a federal/provincial working group is attempting to identify measures that can be used to conserve limber pine in Alberta. Examples of initiatives that are being undertaken include: assessment of health, collection of cones, and storage of seed with the intent of replanting this species on the landscape.

Invasive, non-native, and noxious plant species are present in OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland. Kentucky bluegrass, timothy, creeping red fescue, smooth brome, cicer milk vetch, and meadow brome all occur in either, or both, of the Longview and Pekisko parcels of the Heritage Rangeland. Invasive non-native agronomic species, such as those present in some areas of this Heritage Rangeland, are a threat to the maintenance and restoration of native rough fescue grasslands. Rough fescue grasslands are particularly susceptible to these non-native species.

2.1.2.1 Insects, Pathogens & Invasive Species - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
<p>To manage insects, pathogens, and invasive/non-native species to restore and promote the regeneration of native grasslands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noxious species that threaten native grasslands will be controlled/eradicated using methods that have the least impact on other plant species. Herbicides may be authorized by SRD for use as a rangeland management tool on the public land designated as Heritage Rangeland. • Promote research on effective control measures for invasive agronomics in native fescue grasslands. • Complete an inventory of limber pine communities and determine appropriate protection measures from known threats, such as mountain pine beetle. • Insect infestation/tree diseases will be monitored and control/eradication programs will be implemented when required to maintain ecological values and to protect adjacent land from infestation. Sanitation cutting and controlled burning are the preferred control measures. • Intentional introduction of non-native species of plants or animals will not be considered or permitted.

2.1.3 Wildlife

OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland provides habitat for a significant wildlife population. The landscape supports large carnivores, such as wolves (*Canis lupus*), cougar (*Felis concolor*), coyotes (*Canis latrans*), grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*), and black bear (*Ursus americanus*). Habitat for large ungulates, such as moose (*Alces alces*), elk (*Cervus elaphus*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and white tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) is also abundant. Small mammals, such as badgers, ground squirrels and gophers are present in good numbers. While no data is available, it is expected there are several salamander, frog, toad, and snake species within the Heritage Rangeland. (Gramineae 2008)

Grouse, hawks, eagles, falcons, owls, waterfowl, and migratory birds have also been observed on the ranch lands.

Fish and wildlife will continue to be managed by Sustainable Resource Development to ensure that the broad suite of needs of the domestic cattle production and native wildlife species are met.

A comprehensive wildlife inventory has not been completed yet for OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland. Notes gathered on the birds and mammals present in the Heritage Rangeland are included in Appendix C.

2.1.3.1 Wildlife - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
To manage wildlife to ensure both domestic cattle production and native wildlife species needs are met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete faunal inventories to confirm the presence or absence, approximate distribution and relative numbers of all vertebrate and selected invertebrate species • Sustainable Resource Development to continue to manage fish and wildlife within the context of the grazing leases

2.1.4 Species at Risk

Within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland there are wildlife and vegetation species present that are of varying conservation significance.

Limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*) is considered a rare species in Alberta. Limber pine is present on the Longview portion of the Heritage Rangeland. Alberta Parks is currently undertaking an inventory of stands within parks to determine the extent and health of limber pine stands.

Notable species that have been observed within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland are:

- Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*), which has been classified as a 'sensitive' (S3) species by Alberta Natural Heritage Information Centre (ANHIC)
- Sharp-tailed Grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*), which is a tracked species (S4) by ANHIC
- Northern Pygmy Owl (*Glaucidium gnoma*), a 'sensitive' (S3) species by ANHIC,
- Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*), a 'sensitive' (S3) species by ANHIC

A listing of the Alberta Natural Heritage Information Centre tracked species for animals present in the Heritage Rangeland is included in Appendix C.

2.1.4.1 Species at Risk - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
To manage known vegetation and wildlife species of risk to ensure their survival and regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete wildlife inventories to confirm status of species, especially those tracked by Alberta Natural Heritage Information Centre • Maintain habitats that support leks for Sharp-tailed Grouse

- Place high conservation value on rough fescue grasslands, shrublands, riparian areas, wetlands, seepages, and springs to maintain integrity and habitat

2.1.5 Water Resources

The Longview and Pekisko ranches are located within the Highwood River basin. The headwaters of the Tongue Creek is located on the Longview Ranch. The Highwood River defines a portion of the southern boundary of the Longview Ranch. Both ranches have numerous intermittent and ephemeral creeks with wetlands throughout. Groundwater surveying and aquifer mapping has not been completed yet for the Municipal District (MD) of Foothills.

2.1.5.1 Water Resources - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
<p>To ensure sustainable and effective management of water resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete groundwater and aquifer mapping for the heritage rangeland, in cooperation with the MD of Foothills No. 31. • The draining or significant alteration of naturally occurring lakes, ponds, streams or wetlands or the alteration in any way of the topography of the surface of the ground is not permitted. • Any activity that would pollute, degrade, or cause unreasonable or detrimental effects on riparian habitat, natural watercourses, wetlands, or other bodies of water, whether on the surface or in the subsurface is not permitted. • Major commercial water developments, including hydro-electric generation, bottling operations, etc. will not be considered. • Livestock water development may be used as a tool for livestock distribution to increase upland range and riparian health. • Construction of minor weirs, pumping to fill stock watering facilities, stream bank stabilization and other similar activities may be considered to improve and protect riparian and rangeland resources. • All water management activity will be in accordance with all applicable legislation, regulation, information

letters and guidelines including but not necessarily limited to Section 1.6.

2.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES

OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland is located in an area of Alberta that has a rich ranching history. There are recorded historical resources within the Longview and Pekisko ranches. The potential for more historical resources on the land is possible, but due to the relatively undeveloped nature of these ranches, they are unknown.

The OH Ranch has taken steps to restore culturally and historically significant features such as the North West Mounted Police post and the original cookhouse. These buildings were part of the historic Longview ranch.

A comprehensive cultural resource inventory has not yet been completed for these ranches.

2.2.1 Cultural Resources - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
To ensure protection of known cultural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete a comprehensive inventory of the cultural resources of the Heritage Rangeland.• Implement appropriate protection measures on sensitive cultural features.• Known cultural or historical resources will be managed in accordance with the <i>Historical Resources Act</i>.

2.3 INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY & RESOURCES

Longview and Pekisko are underlain by bituminous coal deposits with varying levels of oil and natural gas.

There has been industrial use of both the Longview and Pekisko ranches. Alberta Energy records indicate that ten wells were drilled on the Longview ranch prior to 1995. The same records also state that there are two wells that were drilled prior to 1995 on the Pekisko ranch.

There is a large diameter operating pipeline corridor paralleling Highway 22, which passes through the private land portion of the Pekisko ranch.

The subsurface mineral rights of the Longview and Pekisko ranches are a mix of Crown and freehold ownership. As stated in Alberta Energy Information Letter 2003-25, the Government of Alberta will honour existing mineral commitments as defined by tenure, disposition, right, agreement or approval that existed prior to the designation of the heritage rangeland (Appendix D). The Government of Alberta has also agreed to apply

the consistent surface restriction to the public and private land within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland. Surface access is not permitted for all minerals sold in the future, with the exception of metallic and industrial minerals, ammonite shell, and coal, which would be reserved from disposition. The *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas, and Heritage Rangelands Act* sets out legislation, and does allow for certain dispositions within heritage rangelands, that facilitate the development of existing mineral commitments.

2.3.1 Industrial Activity & Resources - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
<p>To effectively manage minerals and natural resource activity within the heritage rangeland in a sustainable manner and to ensure minimal impact to native grasslands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing well sites and related infrastructure are allowed to continue. • Undeveloped Crown mineral commitments which existed prior to the designation will be honoured unless the Crown mineral agreement is lawfully withdrawn, terminated or amended. Honouring existing Crown mineral commitments includes all activities, subsurface and surface, needed to win, work, and recover the mineral resource defined in the existing mineral commitments. • Surface access to all minerals under Crown land will require an approval under the <i>Public Lands Act</i>. Surface access to minerals under private land will require consent of the private land owner. • Established procedures for the review of proposals for development of industrial activity in parks will be followed. Each development application will be given due diligence and every effort will be made to work cooperatively with industry to reduce impacts on known sensitive features or areas. • Any new Crown mineral agreements, under Crown land or under private land with a conservation easement, will be issued with 'no surface access' to prevent new surface disturbances on the entire land base. In these cases, the resources relating to these Crown mineral agreements may only be accessed through directional drilling from outside the boundary of the Heritage Rangeland (referring to public and private land). • Surface access will not be permitted for exploration activities related to any new Crown mineral agreements issued after designation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New mainline pipeline corridors are not allowed. • Existing pipelines will continue as per the existing pipeline agreements. Access will continue for ongoing operations, maintenance of facilities, and emergencies. • Existing mineral exploration will continue until the existing exploration approval expires. • Development of existing Crown mineral commitments will be reviewed by the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) through existing regulatory processes. • All Freehold mineral rights will be honoured. Any development of Freehold rights will be reviewed by ERCB through existing regulatory processes. • The guiding principles of Information Letter 2002-01 (Appendix E) will apply to all industrial mineral activity. • Once resources are depleted all infrastructure associated with existing commitments, including roads, would be phased out and the disturbed lands will be reclaimed. • All industrial resource activity will be in accordance with all applicable legislation, regulation, information letters and guidelines including but not necessarily limited to Section 1.6.
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2.4 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

With the long-standing ranching history of OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland, several resource management activities have existed on the landscape.

2.4.1 Trapping

There is one registered Fur Management Area that overlaps a portion of the Longview ranch in Twp 18, Rge 4, W5. It is unknown what level of trapping activity is occurring on this section of the ranch.

2.4.1.1 Trapping - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
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<p>To manage wildlife populations in a sustainable manner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing, registered fur management areas will be permitted to continue, provided that the activity does not impact the grazing operations. Fur management areas will continue to be administered and managed by SRD. • New traplines will not be issued in this heritage rangeland.
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2.4.2 Range Management

The OH Ranch has been an operating ranch for over 125 years. Throughout the operation, the use of traditional ranching and range management techniques has been important. The OH Ranch places emphasis on flexibility in range management and the ability to respond to changes in moisture and growing conditions.

The Longview and Pekisko ranches are used as complimentary grazing areas for the OH Ranch. In general terms, the Longview ranch is used for calving, weaning, and summer grazing. Calving takes place naturally and with little or no human assistance. Some winter grazing, by bred heifers and first calvers, is provided by the Longview fields. Bulls, when not breeding, are kept in the Bull field south of Highway 541. During the winter, the pregnant cow herd is trailed from Longview to the Pekisko Winter Range. Cows graze the wide open rough fescue grassland, blown free of snow by the frequent Chinooks. The willow groves provide shelter for the herd. (Gramineae 2008)

The Pekisko ranch, including the Winter Range Inc. grazing lease, in conjunction with the Longview ranch, allows the cow herd and replacement heifers to graze 365 days of the year. The OH Ranch range management techniques maintain the range resources with an adapted cattle herd. The need for supplemental winter forage is minimal, thus reducing the potential for the introduction of invasive non-native plants.

2.4.2.1 Grazing

Domestic grazing on the public land is managed under a public lands grazing lease issued to the leaseholder (OH Ranch and Winter Range Inc.) by SRD, under the authority of the *Public Lands Act*. Three separate grazing leases are issued on the two parcels. In total, the grazing leases provide 4,426 animal unit months (AUMs) of grazing annually, as determined by range health assessments conducted summer 2009 (1706 AUMs on the Winter Range Inc, 2545 and 175 AUMs on the OH Ranch grazing leases).

Past inventories and grazing audits will serve as baseline information for the grazing leases. Audits will assess the range and riparian health. Sustainable Resource Development will continue to assess and monitor all grazing activity related to the grazing leases within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland.

The *Grazing Lease Stewardship Code of Practice* (SRD 2007) highlights the important functions of healthy rangelands and a code of practice for all grazing leaseholders. This code of practice will be considered the minimum standard to which the grazing activity in OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland will be managed. Range health conditions, determined

through assessments, will need to be maintained or improved upon based on these minimum, and other effective, stewardship practices.

2.4.2.2 Range Management - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
<p>To continue to use sustainable range management and grazing for conservation of native grasslands</p>	<p>All existing grazing leases within the heritage rangeland will continue to exist and will continue to be managed by SRD. Fees will be paid to the Government of Alberta.</p> <p>Grazing will continue as the primary management tool for maintaining the native grassland ecology.</p> <p>Existing operational plans and agreements will continue and will be updated/replaced as required.</p> <p>Annual stock return forms will continue to be submitted to SRD to aid in tracking the use and ensure that grazing levels are sustainable to support range and riparian health objectives.</p> <p>Grazing disposition audits will be performed by SRD based on business rules/measurables to confirm rangeland and riparian health are being maintained or improved.</p> <p>New range management activities will be reviewed by SRD and Alberta Parks to ensure consistency with this management plan.</p>

2.5 LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

The majority of OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland is undeveloped. This undeveloped nature is essential for the continuation of the native grasslands.

There is one road, on the public land of the Pekisko ranch, under a License of Occupation. This is a road used for ranch operations and is not a public access road.

There is one public road, Highway 541, which travels through the Longview ranch. The corridor of this public road is not included in the heritage rangeland designation.

OH Ranch has developed a number of facilities on the private land under conservation easement to accommodate existing and future operation of the ranch. In particular, the ranch includes a private residence and ancillary buildings (N ½ 33-18-3-W5M), a private riverside cabin and minor facilities (SE 34-18-3-W5M), a private ‘cow camp’ cabin, barn and facilities (NW 6-19-3-W5M), and a private summer cabin (NW 33-18-3-W5M). Each

of these sites is serviced by a road or trail on the private land under conservation easement.

Surface access will be permitted to existing Crown mineral commitments and to existing freehold minerals. Surface access and activity will minimize disturbance as per conditions of approval and in keeping with the principles contained in ERCB IL 2002-01 (Appendix E).

2.5.1 Land Use & Development - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
<p>To effectively manage land use and development to ensure protection of the natural values and grazing operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial logging and commercial salvage logging are not permitted. • Existing communication towers may remain, but new tower sites or expansion of existing towers is not permitted. • Existing major power transmission line corridors may remain, but new corridors are not permitted. Access will continue to be provided for ongoing operation and maintenance of existing power transmission corridors. • Right of ways, in association with honouring existing mineral commitments, will be permitted, but must be developed to minimize disturbance and should follow existing access routes. • The development of commercial windmills and wind farms is not permitted. • Removal of surface materials is prohibited on public land under Heritage Rangeland designation. Surface materials include sand, gravel, clay, peat and marl. Surface dispositions may be permitted in honouring existing sub-surface commitments. • Resource roads held under a License of Occupation are allowed to continue until the road is no longer needed for the resource activity. Resource roads will be closed and reclaimed when the resource activity ends. • New trails required for ranch operations may be considered for development on the public land under Heritage Rangeland designation. Any development of trails for ranching operation will require the prior review and approval of SRD and Alberta Parks.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recreational trails and/or roads will not be developed on the public land designated as Heritage Rangeland.• New public roads will not be developed.• Development and/or improvements to existing structures on private land under conservation easement will maintain the character of the ranch and will not impact the ecological integrity of the ranch.
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3.0 OUTDOOR RECREATION & HEALTHY LIVING

3.1 RECREATION

Limited opportunities for non-facility based recreation will be available provided that they are compatible with the preservation of the natural values and with grazing management.

Outdoor recreation is not a priority of this Heritage Rangeland and will not be promoted. Recreational activities that are compatible with the Heritage Rangeland designation are:

- foot access
- horse use
- recreational hunting
- fishing

These activities would be permitted subject to the content of this management plan, the Recreational Access Regulation (See Appendix F), and contact with the lessee.

Recreational activities that are not compatible with OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland and will not be permitted under any circumstance are:

- commercial tourism facilities (such as restaurants, hotels, motels, RV parks, swimming pools, etc.)
- outdoor recreation facilities (such as auto access campgrounds, picnic areas, hard surface hiking trails, boat launches, beach areas, etc.),
- power boating
- recreational Off Highway Vehicle and/or snowmobile use

OH Ranch can continue to use the private land under conservation easement as settings for private, special events.

3.1.1 OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland Recreation Access

Motorized access to OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland is controlled for both the public and private land. Locked gates are in place around the boundary of the ranch. Private land is posted as No Trespassing.

Public access to the grazing leases (now under heritage rangeland designation) is managed by the leaseholder and SRD according to the Recreational Access Regulation. (For more information see Appendix F). Recreational activities that

have been permitted in the past, and will continue to be permitted with prior contact to the leaseholder, are: fishing, recreational hunting, horseback riding, and foot access (walking/hiking). There is not a formalized trail system within the Longview or Pekisko sections of the Heritage Rangeland.

Recreational Users must comply with the following existing conditions of use (general conditions to all Heritage Rangelands as per the Recreational Access Regulation):

- No littering
- Have direct control of any animal brought into the Heritage Rangeland
- Do not park vehicles so that they block approach to land and not within the boundary unless consent is given by the leaseholder.
- Do not set, light, or maintain fires.
- Do not enter or use any building or improvement on the lease without the consent of the leaseholder.
- Do not cause damage to any land or property.
- Leave gates and other property as they were found.
- Advise the leaseholder of any damage to property or other matters of concern that arose as a result of their recreational activity.
- Comply with any recreational strategies stated in this management plan or a separate recreational management plan, should one be prepared.
- Comply with the terms and conditions imposed by the leaseholder.
- Comply with any restrictions, prohibitions, terms, and conditions that may be imposed by the Local Settlement Officer or Director.

When requested, recreational users must provide the following information to the leaseholder:

- The number of people wishing to access the land and their names and vehicle license plate numbers.
- The name of a contact person and the means by which they can be contacted.
- The recreational purpose, proposed date, time, and duration of access, and location.

3.1.2 Recreation - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
To provide reasonable non-motorized public access to the heritage rangeland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of the use of the Recreational Access Regulations by the grazing leaseholder, in cooperation with SRD and Alberta Parks, to determine appropriate recreational activities and provide access to the Heritage Rangeland. • Promote communication and coordination between recreational users and ask that the rights and property of the leaseholders be respected through the use of signs at access points.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the Heritage Rangeland may be closed or restricted to protect ecological values, to ensure public safety, or for management purposes.
<p>To restrict the disturbance associated with access trails, designated trails, and motorized recreational activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motorized recreation (OHV or other motorized vehicles) will not be permitted in the Heritage Rangeland for any purpose (as stated in <i>WAERNAHR Act</i>) • Aircraft landings will not be permitted except for emergencies, approved research activities, management or resource protection requirements, or operations associated with a disposition where aircraft use has been specifically authorized. • A formal trail system for any use will not be developed on the public land under Heritage Rangeland designation. • Public education of the need to restrict motorized access will be included in the key messages for public education and awareness programs.
<p>To provide opportunities for compatible recreation opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horseback riding and hiking will be permitted with prior contact to the leaseholder or their designate. Other, non-motorized recreation activities that do not degrade natural values or impede grazing/ranch operations may be considered, but access is not guaranteed. • Camping will not be permitted. • No fires, related to recreation, will be permitted, with the exception of those used at existing facilities on the private land under conservation easement. • Biking will not be permitted as a road or trail network to support cycling does not exist and will not be developed. • Recreational hunting will continue however the use of motorized vehicles (including OHVs) is not permitted for access or game retrieval. • Motorized vehicles will not be permitted for recreational use.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of new facilities and infrastructure to support outdoor recreation will not be permitted on the public land. • The construction, conducting or operating of game farms will not be permitted.
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3.2 PUBLIC SAFETY

Public safety is an important issue in any park. Fire, wildlife, and the act of recreation can create situations that put the public or managers of the land at risk. Should industrial activity be present within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland, industry and the Government of Alberta will work together to ensure appropriate public safety measures are implemented.

3.2.1 Fire Protection

The grasslands of the Heritage Rangeland are susceptible to fire. It is the responsibility of the grazing leaseholder to reduce known fire risks (such as extreme fire loads, use of machinery in grasslands, proper use of storage buildings, etc.). Fire suppression measures would be provided by Forest Protection Branch – Forestry Division, Sustainable Resource Development and/or the MD of Foothills. All activities would be in accordance with the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act*.

3.2.2 Human - Wildlife Conflict Prevention

While the Heritage Rangeland supports abundant habitat for wildlife, human visitation to OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland is minimal. While the potential for human - wildlife conflict is present, this has not been an issue in the past.

3.2.3 Public Safety Education

Any activity can pose a risk. While the focus of Heritage Rangelands is not recreation, recreational users need to be aware of the risks and be prepared. Education prior to visiting the Heritage Rangeland, and measures to educate users after they arrive, helps ensure that potential recreation users of OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland are aware of the risks.

3.2.4 Public Safety - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
To ensure fire and the use of fire is managed to protect person and property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All wildfires will be suppressed in this heritage rangeland. • Campfires are not permitted.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logging may be permitted for fire suppression and fire-risk reduction.
To minimize the occurrence of human - wildlife conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include human - wildlife conflict prevention messages in public education materials. • Human management will be the focus for human - wildlife conflict prevention methods. • Wildlife control measures will be passive, with the exception of emergency situations where public safety is at risk.
To educate recreational users of potential risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential risks of recreating in the Heritage Rangeland will be identified and included in public education materials. • The recreational user assumes the risk of recreating in the Heritage Rangeland. • Access will be controlled and all recreation requires contact be made with the grazing leaseholder as described in the Recreational Access Regulations.

4.0 LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT

4.1 PUBLIC EDUCATION & AWARENESS

As a result of the designation of the public lands within the Longview and Pekisko portions of the OH Ranch being designated as Heritage Rangeland, it is anticipated that this will increase the potential for visitors to the areas. Traditional users, and newcomers, will among others things, need to be educated about the status and location of the Heritage Rangeland and the conditions and restrictions that need to be observed by all visitors.

There is not a Heritage Appreciation (HA) or Environmental Education (EE) program operating at OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland. While these programs highlight the area's natural and cultural history and instill a sense of connection and level of education for park visitors on the importance of those features to the Alberta Parks system, on-site programs, including interpretive signage, will not be developed for OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland. Any HA or EE program intended for OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland will be delivered at other suitable sites, such as Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park.

4.1.1 Public Education & Awareness - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
<p>Communicate key messages to all visitors who are on-site or are planning to visit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify specific audience groups and their educational needs through the development of a baseline audience profile. • Explore appropriate methods of disseminating information to potential visitors and user groups in response to baseline audience profile. Methods may include, but are not limited to, Internet, off-site interpretation, and de-marketing campaigns.
<p>Develop education materials based on natural heritage and ranching culture of areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop education materials, which are based on the ranching history of the park and building a stronger connection to the land. • Work with OH Ranch, Bar U Ranch National Historic Site, and the conservation easement holders to develop the education materials.

<p>Ensure education and awareness materials do not give high exposure to the Heritage Rangeland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given that the OH Ranch will continue to operate on the lands within the Heritage Rangeland, the conditions/restrictions to access, and the sensitivity of the grassland ecology, public education and awareness initiatives will not promote the Heritage Rangeland with the aim of attracting increased levels of visitor use.
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4.2 LAND STEWARDSHIP

Both the Longview and Pekisko sections of the OH Ranch have been managed for grazing and traditional ranching. Ranching relies on a close relationship with the land and land stewardship is an important aspect of that relationship.

Stewardship initiatives in the Longview and Pekisko sections of the OH Ranch have included:

- The OH Ranch is a member of the Tongue Creek Watershed Group and provides evaluation sites along Tongue Creek.
- Monitoring of Sharp tailed grouse lekking sites.
- Stream bank stabilization along Ings Creek. The bank stabilization project was required after the damage of the 2005 flood event and involved the plantings of poplar and willow species from another area of the ranch.
- The OH Ranch has an ongoing weed control program.
- The voluntary use of winter grazing for better grassland ecology management.
- Strict access control to the private land and implementation of the Recreational Access Regulations on the grazing lease lands.
- Water stewardship measures around the use of water resources for livestock.

The ranching activity and overall land management of the Longview and Pekisko portions of the OH Ranch have exhibited a long history of grazing and stewardship.

4.2.1 Land Stewardship - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
<p>Encourage and maintain ongoing and new land stewardship initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work cooperatively with other government agencies, OH Ranch, and conservation easements holders to continue effective land stewardship initiatives. Include land stewardship methods and example in education materials.

4.3 RESEARCH & MONITORING

Areas like OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland provide excellent opportunities for studies and research projects on a variety of topics, such as: natural systems, wildlife, reclamation of native grasslands after disturbance, human impacts to the environment, the effectiveness of new and current management practices, and so on. Given the character of these sections of land and their significance of being remnants of native prairie grassland, this Heritage Rangeland may well be of great interest to researchers. Research is considered to be a complimentary activity in Heritage Rangelands. The information and data obtained through research is valuable, not only in better managing the site, but in furthering our understanding of the ecosystems within the site.

4.3.1 Research & Monitoring - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
<p>Encourage research that advances scientific knowledge and contributes to the effective management of the Heritage Rangeland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All research activity must be regulated and managed through research and collection permits. • Applications for research and collection will be submitted to Alberta Parks. Approval (permits) for any research occurring on public land in OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland will be granted by Alberta Parks, in consultation with the OH Ranch and SRD. • Research projects that will directly benefit provincial agencies in the management of Heritage Rangelands, or other parks, will be given priority. • All inventory and research projects that are carried out by government agencies, or agents on behalf of the government, must comply with all government policies. • Research projects should be compatible with protecting the resource values found within the area. • Opportunity for appropriate research partnerships (i.e. inter-ministry, industry, academia, external partners, etc.) will be explored and encouraged. • Research projects should produce results and include monitoring and evaluation activities that

	<p>aid in application of the science based decision making process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All specimens collected for research will remain the property of the Province of Alberta.
<p>To implement a monitoring program to ensure that the long-term integrity of grasslands is being protected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop monitoring programs that track range and riparian health, invasive species occurrences, rare plant occurrences and survival, or other indicators of grassland integrity, to provide an overall indication of grassland integrity. • SRD will continue to work with the grazing leaseholder to collect information and evaluate range and riparian health, and range resources, for the purposes of long-term sustainable grazing. • All sampling and monitoring methods will reflect current stewardship and standard SRD range and riparian health practices.

5.0 TOURISM & COMMUNITY

5.1 PARK FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Heritage Rangelands are not intended for facility based activity, and as such, facility and infrastructure development will be kept to a minimum. There is no facility development existing on the public land designated as OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland. There are facilities on the private land that support the ranching operations occurring on the entire land base. These facilities will remain the responsibility of the OH Ranch.

5.1.1 Park Facilities & Infrastructure - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
<p>To maintain the undisturbed natural quality of the Heritage Rangeland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No facilities or infrastructure will be developed to support recreation or education activity on public land designated as Heritage Rangeland. • Construction, re-construction, maintenance, or improvement of any facilities or infrastructure on public land within the Heritage Rangeland is not permitted without Ministerial approval. • Facilities to support day-use, such as washrooms and/or garbage disposal, etc. will not be developed on public land designated as Heritage Rangeland. • Parking facilities, on the perimeter of the Heritage Rangeland, may be considered to manage access for appropriate activities. • Facilities and infrastructure proposed outside of the existing facilities on the private land under conservation easement will require an amendment to this plan prior to approval and development.

5.2 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Visitation and tourism development is not a priority of the Heritage Rangeland designation. Public visitation to OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland is minimal it will not be promoted as a tourist destination. Any public visitation to OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland will be subject to the Recreational Access Regulations (See Appendix F for more information).

5.2.1 Commercial Recreation, Guiding, and Outfitting

Alberta Parks is responsible for the administration of commercial recreation activities in its system. A permit is required by anyone who leads or guides other people on recreational trips within a park (including heritage rangelands). This type of recreation is not currently occurring in OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland. There is potential for non-motorized, commercial recreation, for example horseback tours, within the Heritage Rangeland. All commercial recreation will be day use only and require review by Alberta Parks and SRD. All approved commercial recreation, guiding, and outfitting activities occurring on public land designated as Heritage Rangeland will be issued a proper permit by Alberta Parks.

5.2.2 Tourism Development - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
<p>To provide opportunities appropriate activities for recreation and education, while maintaining the protection and grazing significance of the Heritage Rangeland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland will not be promoted or advertised as a tourism or recreation destination within the Alberta Parks system. • Appropriate activities will be one of the key messages included in public education. • Public access will be subject to the Recreational Access Regulations.
<p>To allow for limited, low-impact commercial recreation activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial recreation activities will require prior permission from Alberta Parks and Sustainable Resource Development, in consultation with the grazing leaseholder. • Permission is not guaranteed, but may be considered, for activities that are compatible with protecting the natural heritage and do not disrupt grazing operations. • Restrictions to access, duration, group size, and activity may be placed on any permits granted for commercial recreation activities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate commercial recreation activities can be pursued by OH Ranch Ltd. Commercial recreation and outfitting activity provided by OH Ranch, occurring on the public land designated as Heritage Rangeland, will be reviewed by Alberta Parks and SRD. Approved activities will be issued a proper permit by Alberta Parks.
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5.3 SPECIAL EVENTS

Large scale special events are not compatible with the Heritage Rangeland designation. The public land within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland has not been used a setting or staging area for any special events in the past.

5.3.1 Commercial Filming

Alberta Parks recognizes the economic and other benefits associated with commercial filming. The attractive natural features, such as those within OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland, may be of interest to certain commercial filming productions.

5.3.2 Special Events - Management Objectives and Actions

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	MANAGEMENT ACTIONS
<p>To provide a setting or staging area for appropriate special events, including commercial filming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No special events are permitted to occur on the public land designated as Heritage Rangeland, without prior permission from Alberta Parks, SRD, in consultation with the grazing lease holder. • For commercial filming on the public land designated as Heritage Rangeland, an application must be completed and submitted to Alberta Parks to gain the required permission. Alberta Parks and SRD will review the application and issue permission for this activity on the public land designated as Heritage Rangeland. • Permission may be granted if the special event activity is deemed to be appropriate for the Heritage Rangeland setting and does not impact natural or cultural features, or disrupt grazing operations.



6.0 IMPLEMENTATION & REVIEW

6.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

Upon review and approval, the OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland Management Plan will be implemented by the Government of Alberta with support from its partners.

OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland was designated, by an Order in Council, under the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas, and Heritage Rangelands Act*. Alberta Parks is responsible for the implementation of this act on the public land designated as Heritage Rangeland and its overall management. However, Heritage Rangelands are based on a cooperative approach to management with several partners acting as lead managers on different aspects of implementation and management.

Overall ranch and grazing activity will remain the responsibility of the OH Ranch. Day to day operations regarding ranch operation, livestock grazing, and rangeland stewardship will continue to be carried out by OH Ranch, as stipulated by the grazing leases. All aspects of the grazing lease dispositions (including range and riparian health assessments) will continue to be administered and monitored by SRD.

Private land, under conservation easement, will be the responsibility of the OH Ranch. The Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Southern Alberta Land Trust Society will monitor the private land management activity to ensure land stewardship practices are being implemented.

Overall land management practices will be consistent throughout OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland. Opportunities for coordinated monitoring programs and approaches that do not impact ranch operations will be explored by Alberta Parks, SRD, the NCC, and SALTS.

Alberta Energy will continue to manage all Crown mineral rights and Crown mineral agreements under Crown lands and private lands. The ERCB will remain the regulator of industrial mineral activities.

6.2 COORDINATION OF LAND MANAGEMENT

OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland will continue to be managed in a coordinated and complimentary approach. The Government of Alberta and the OH Ranch will continue to build a strong working relationship that promotes stewardship of the land and effective management measures.

The OH Ranch will continue to operate and manage the grazing and ranching operations in OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland. The OH Ranch, in cooperation with the Government of Alberta, will continue to manage the land. In order to meet the management objectives stated in this management plan, the coordination of land management between all land managers is critical.

To ensure coordination between all partners, annual meetings will be held. These meetings will address several overall land management actions, for example proposed research, monitoring needs, existing mineral commitment development, etc. These meetings will also provide progress reports on past activities occurring on the land. Annual meetings would provide the opportunity for all land management partners (Alberta Parks, SRD, Energy, the NCC, SALTS, and OH Ranch) to be aware of ongoing activities on the land base and develop coordinated approaches to meeting common goals.

6.3 REVIEW OF THE PLAN

This plan will be reviewed on a 10-year cycle. The 10-year review cycle allows for a review of overall management strategies and for public comment on those that have been occurring on and are applicable to the public land designated as Heritage Rangeland. If required, amendments to the plan to revise or update management direction can be completed prior to the 10-year cycle. These plan amendments can clarify, amend, or add management direction. As with the development of this plan, inter-ministry, First Nation, stakeholder, and public consultation will be a critical component of the plan review or plan amendments. Review comment and feedback will be incorporated into the review of the plan and will help develop the next generation of the OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland Management Plan.

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APPENDICES



Appendix A: OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland – Permitted Uses Table

Activity	OH Ranch Heritage Rangeland	
Recreational Uses & Facilities		
Foot Access	Yes	According to Recreational Access Regulations
Recreational Hunting	Yes	According to Recreational Access Regulations
Fishing	Yes	According to Recreational Access Regulations
Recreational Horse Use	Yes	According to Recreational Access Regulations
Cycling, Mountain Biking	No	
Backcountry Camping	No	
Auto Access Camping	No	
Golf Courses	No	
Downhill Ski Areas	No	
Power Boating	No	
Off-Highway Vehicles	No	
Snowmobiles	No	
Motor Vehicle Access	No	
Helicopter Landing	No	
Float Plane Landing	No	
Fixed Roof Accommodations	No	
Picnic Shelters	No	
Trail Systems	No	
Non-Recreational Uses & Facilities		
Existing Trapping	Yes	
New Trapping	No	
Existing Domestic Livestock Grazing	Yes	Under grazing lease
Commercial Logging	No	
Existing Telecommunication Towers	Yes	
New Telecommunication Towers	No	
Existing Transmission Corridors	Yes	
New Transmission Corridors	No	With the exception of those required for developing existing mineral commitments
New Electricity Generation Developments (including renewable sources such as wind, geothermal, water, and biomass)	No	With the exception of those required for developing existing mineral commitments
Existing Oil & Gas Commitments	Yes	Development of existing commitments is permitted, must minimize impacts
New Oil & Gas Commitments	Yes	No surface access
Surface Materials (e.g. sand, gravel, peat, marl)	No	
Minerals – Existing Commitments	Yes	Surface access and activity will be permitted in honouring existing mineral commitments. Surface access and activity will minimize surface disturbance as per conditions of approval and principles of IL 2002-01.
Minerals – New Exploration	No	
Existing Mainline Pipelines	Yes	
New Mainline Pipelines	No	
Existing Resource Roads	Yes	
New Resource Roads	No	Access for developing existing oil and gas commitments must use existing roads, if possible
New Cultivation	No	
Research	Yes	

Appendix B: List of Plant Communities Mapped at Pekisko and Longview Properties (Gramineae 2008)

Community Type	Property	
	Longview	Pekisko
Aspen - Balsom Poplar - Marsh Reed Grass	y	
Aspen - Kentucky Bluegrass - Timothy	y	
Aspen - Rose - Hairy Wild Rye	y	
Aspen - Rose - Pine Grass	y	
Aspen - Rough Fescue	y	
Aspen - White Spruce - Bearberry - Hairy Wild Rye	y	
Basket Willow - Awned Sedge		y
Basket Willow - Kentucky Bluegrass		y
Bebb Willow - Kentucky Bluegrass	y	
Bebb Willow - Snowberry - Rose	y	
Creeping Red Fescue - Timothy	y	
Idaho Fescue - Parry Oat Grass - Rough Fescue	y	
Idaho Fescue - Parry Oat Grass - Sedge		y
Kentucky Bluegrass - Baltic Rush - Tufted Hairgrass	y	
Kentucky Bluegrass - Rough Fescue	y	
Kentucky Bluegrass - Timothy - Dandelion	y	y
Parry Oat Grass - Rough Fescue - Idaho Fescue	y	
Rose – Snowberry		y
Rough Fescue - Idaho Fescue - Parry Oat Grass	y	y
Rough Fescue - Kentucky Bluegrass	y	
Sedge Meadow	y	
Smooth Brome		y
Smooth Brome - Kentucky Bluegrass	y	
Smooth Brome - Kentucky Bluegrass - Timothy		y
Timothy	y	
Timothy - Marsh Reed Grass	y	
Timothy - Orchard Grass	y	
Timothy – Sedge	y	
White Spruce - Aspen - Hairy Wild Rye	y	
White Spruce - Aspen - Rose - Marsh Reed Grass	y	
White Spruce - Douglas Fir - White Meadowsweet	y	
White Spruce - Lodgepole Pine - Aspen - Pinegrass	y	
Willow – Aspen	y	
Willow - Awned Sedge		y
Willow - Kentucky Bluegrass		y
Willow – Sedge	y	
Willow spp. - Marsh Reed Grass	y	
Willow spp. – Sedges	y	
Willow spp. – Timothy	y	

Appendix C: Listing of tracked species

Table 1: Tracked Animal Species in Foothills Parkland Natural Subregion

Element Scientific Name (SName)	Element Common Name	SRank	NRank	GRank
<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum</i>	Long-toed Salamander	S3	N5	G5
<i>Rana pipiens</i>	Leopard Frog	S2S3	N5	G5
<i>Rana luteiventris</i>	Columbia Spotted Frog	S3	N4	G4
<i>Lophodytes cucullatus</i>	Hooded Merganser	S2	N5B	G5
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Peregrine Falcon	S3	N3N,N4B	G4
<i>Athene cunicularia hypugaea</i>	Western Burrowing Owl	S2	N2B	G4T4
<i>Stellula calliope</i>	Calliope Hummingbird	S2	N5B	G5
<i>Empidonax traillii</i>	Willow Flycatcher	S3	N5B	G5
<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>	Black-headed Grosbeak	S2	N5B	G5
<i>Notropis blennioides</i>	River Shiner	S2	N4	G5
<i>Sorex vagrans</i>	Wandering Shrew	S1	N5	G5
<i>Lasiurus noctivagans</i>	Silver-haired Bat	S3	N5	G5
<i>Tamias ruficaudus</i>	Red-tailed Chipmunk	S2	N3N4	G5
<i>Ochlodes sylvanoides</i>	Woodland Skipper	S2	N5	G5
<i>Papilio multicaudatus</i>	Two-tailed Swallowtail	S1	N3N4	G5
<i>Papilio eurymedon</i>	Pale Swallowtail	S2	N3N4	G5
<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>	Little Copper	S2	N5	G5
<i>Satyrium fuliginosum</i>	Sooty Gossamer Wing	S1	N1N2	G4
<i>Glaucopsyche piasus</i>	Arrowhead Blue	S2	N4	G5
<i>Boloria epithore</i>	Pacific Fritillary	S2	N4N5	G5
<i>Limenitis lorquini</i>	Lorquin's Admiral	S1S2	N5	G5
<i>Sympetrum pallipes</i>	Striped Meadowhawk	S2S4	N5	G5
<i>Ischnura cervula</i>	Pacific Forktail	S2S3	N5	G5

Table 2: Notes for birds occurring at the Pekisko and Longview portions of the OH Ranch, May 2008

Scientific Name	Common Name	Longview	Pekisko
<i>Branta canadensis</i>	Canada Goose		+
<i>Anas strepera</i>	Gadwall	+	+
<i>Anas americana</i>	American Wigeon		+
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Mallard	+	+
<i>Anas discors</i>	Blue-winged Teal		+
<i>Anas clypeata</i>	Northern Shoveler	+	+
<i>Aythya americana</i>	Redhead	+	
<i>Aythya collaris</i>	Ring-necked Duck	+	
<i>Aythya affinis</i>	Lesser Scaup	+	+
<i>Bucephala albeola</i>	Bufflehead		+
<i>Tympanuchus phasianellus</i>	Sharp-tailed Grouse	+	
<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	Pied-billed Grebe	+	
<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	Horned Grebe		+
<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>	Swainson's Hawk	+	
<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	Red-tailed Hawk	+	+
<i>Buteo regalis</i>	Ferruginous Hawk		+
<i>Fulica americana</i>	American Coot	+	+
<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	Killdeer	+	
<i>Numenius americanus</i>	Long-billed Curlew	+	
<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>	Wilson's Phalarope	+	+
<i>Larus pipixcan</i>	Franklin's Gull		+
<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	Black Tern		+
<i>Zenaidura macroura</i>	Mourning Dove	+	
<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	Northern Flicker	+	
<i>Empidonax traillii</i>	Willow Flycatcher		+
<i>Empidonax minimus</i>	Least Flycatcher	+	
<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	Red-eyed Vireo		+
<i>Corvus corax</i>	Common Raven	+	
<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	Tree Swallow	+	
<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	Northern Rough-winged Swallow		+
<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>	Cliff Swallow		+
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Barn Swallow	+	
<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>	Black-capped Chickadee	+	
<i>Sitta canadensis</i>	Red-breasted Nuthatch	+	
<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	House Wren	+	
<i>Sialia currucoides</i>	Mountain Bluebird	+	
<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	American Robin	+	+
<i>Dendroica petechia</i>	Yellow Warbler	+	+
<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>	Wilson's Warbler		+
<i>Spizella pallida</i>	Clay-colored Sparrow	+	+
<i>Poocetes gramineus</i>	Vesper Sparrow	+	+
<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	Song Sparrow		+
<i>Junco hyemalis</i>	Dark-eyed Junco	+	
<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	Red-winged Blackbird		+

<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>	Western Meadowlark	+	+
<i>Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus</i>	Yellow-headed Blackbird		+
<i>Molothrus ater</i>	Brown-headed Cowbird	+	+
<i>Carduelis tristis</i>	American Goldfinch	+	

Table 3: Notes for mammals occurring at the Pekisko and Longview portions of the OH Ranch, May 2008

Scientific Name	Common Name	Longview	Pekisko
<i>Spermophilus richardsonii</i>	Richardson's Ground Squirrel	+	
<i>Spermophilus columbianus</i>	Columbian Ground Squirrel	+	
<i>Thomomys talpoides</i>	Northern Pocket Gopher	+	
<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>	Muskrat		+
<i>Canis lupus</i>	Gray Wolf	+	+
<i>Ursus americanus</i>	Black Bear	+	
<i>Ursus arctos</i>	Grizzly Bear	+	
<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>	Striped Skunk	+	
<i>Felis concolor</i>	Cougar	+	
<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	Elk	+	+
<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>	Mule Deer	+	+
<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	White-tailed Deer	+	+
<i>Alces alces</i>	Moose	+	

Appendix D: Information Letter 2003-25 – Government of Alberta: Honouring Existing Mineral Commitments in Legislated Provincial Protected Areas



Petroleum Plaza - North Tower
9945 - 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T5K 2G6

September 10, 2003

INFORMATION LETTER 2003-25

**SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA: HONOURING EXISTING MINERAL COMMITMENTS IN
LEGISLATED PROVINCIAL PROTECTED AREAS**

INTRODUCTION

This Information Letter describes the Alberta government's policy to honour existing mineral commitments in legislated protected areas ("protected areas") in Alberta. Legislated protected areas include the following classes of parks and protected areas: wildland provincial parks, provincial parks, and provincial recreation areas established under the *Provincial Parks Act*, as well as natural areas and heritage rangelands established under the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas and Heritage Rangelands Act*. This does not include Willmore Wilderness Park, wilderness areas or ecological reserves where the exploration and working of minerals is precluded.

This letter is directed to Alberta government staff who process applications for mineral surface and subsurface dispositions on provincial Crown land, and to applicants who require government approval, agreements or dispositions to use provincial Crown land in protected areas for mineral surface and subsurface activities.

BACKGROUND

The Government of Alberta's Special Places program concluded in July 2001. A total of 81 protected areas were designated, adding nearly two million hectares to the province's network of parks and protected areas. The network now encompasses about 2.8 million hectares of provincial land, or approximately 4 percent of the province's land base. Of this, only a portion is affected by existing commitments. As the mineral resource associated with existing commitments inside protected areas is developed and depleted over time, it is expected that protected areas will eventually contain no existing mineral commitments.

HONOURING EXISTING COMMITMENTS

The Government of Alberta has agreed to honour existing mineral commitments as defined by any tenure, disposition, right, agreement or approval that existed prior to a protected area being established. This includes all activities, both subsurface and

surface, needed to win, work and recover the mineral resource defined in the existing mineral commitment. Considering that the primary purpose of the *Provincial Parks Act* and the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves, Natural Areas and Heritage Rangelands Act* is to protect these areas, special care must be taken when exploring, working and recovering the mineral resource in order to minimize impacts of activities on the natural landscape, wildlife, fish and vegetation.

SUBSURFACE

Existing Subsurface Commitments

Existing commitments will be honoured, which includes renewing subsurface dispositions for existing mineral activities.

SURFACE

Existing Surface Commitments

Existing commitments will be honoured, which includes renewing surface dispositions, approvals and agreements for existing mineral activities.

New Surface Dispositions

Applications for new surface dispositions for existing surface (e.g., a new disposition for a pipeline to a well) or subsurface (e.g., a new disposition for a well, road, pipeline, facility, etc.) commitments will also be honoured as necessary 'extensions' to an existing commitment, subject to a review through the current application and approval process.

SEISMIC

Applications for seismic programs that are associated with existing subsurface commitments will be reviewed through the current application and approval process.

LIMITATIONS

Existing surface or subsurface commitments within a protected area cannot be used as a basis to access new subsurface rights within a protected area (e.g., whether to access new subsurface deeper rights, new lateral subsurface rights, or additional new rights). By definition, any new subsurface disposition or subsurface right does not qualify as an existing commitment, as it came into effect after the protected area was established.

Bob Fessenden
Deputy Minister
Sustainable Resource
Development

Dr. William Byrne
Deputy Minister
Community
Development

Ken Smith
Deputy Minister
Energy

Appendix E: Information Letter 2002-01 – ERCB: Principles for minimizing surface disturbance in prairie and parklands areas



Calgary Office 640 – 5 Avenue SW Calgary, Alberta Canada T2P 3G4 Tel 403 297-8311 Fax 403 297-7336

Informational Letter IL 2002-1

January 18, 2002

To: All Oil, Gas, and Pipeline Operators¹

PRINCIPLES FOR MINIMIZING SURFACE DISTURBANCE IN NATIVE PRAIRIE AND PARKLAND AREAS

This Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (EUB) informational letter (IL) reflects a review of and supersedes *IL 96-9: Revised Guidelines for Minimizing Disturbance on Native Prairie Areas*. The review was undertaken by a team of representatives from government agencies having jurisdiction over petroleum industry activities as part of an ongoing process to monitor the effectiveness of the existing guidelines and to reflect continuing improvement in industry practices and understanding of native prairie and parkland environments.

In order to minimize disturbance in native prairie or parkland areas of Alberta (see map, Appendix 1), the following guiding principles apply:

- 1) **Industry should avoid disturbing native prairie.** This can often be done by using existing access or nonnative cover areas.
- 2) **If avoidance is not possible, disturbance should be minimized** to whatever degree is absolutely necessary for a project to be constructed or operated safely and successfully. Part of minimizing disturbance is the preparation of a best practices reclamation plan.
- 3) **Predevelopment planning and design must include analysis of needs to avoid or minimize disturbance to native prairie and parkland.** If properly done, such planning should help to minimize environmental impacts, reduce costs for site reclamation, and decrease the risk of incurring environmental liability. Both the construction and operations components of a project, as well as sound access and site management plans, should be carefully thought out and implemented to minimize disturbance. This should include contingency measures for unforeseen circumstances (e.g., blowout).

¹ Geophysical operations are administered through the Exploration Regulations under the authority of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development. This IL does not apply directly to geophysical operators; however, the guidelines *Petroleum Industry Activity in Native Prairie and Parkland Areas: Guidelines for Minimizing Surface Disturbance* (Native Prairie Guidelines Working Group, 2001), cited in this IL, provides practical best practices for geophysical operations in native prairie areas.

- 4) **Reduce overall effects.** The area and intensity of the overall footprint, including other phases of the project, should be minimized. This principle includes the avoidance of incremental environmental effects through coordination and cooperation with other native prairie users.
- 5) **A public consultation program appropriate to the scale of the project should be undertaken.** Information on public consultation programs is provided in *EUB Guide 56: Energy Development Application Guide*, available on the EUB Web site at www.eub.gov.ab.ca.
- 6) **Predevelopment site assessments of unique features (e.g., rare plants or plant communities, species of special concern, historical resources) improve potential to avoid or minimize disturbance of native prairie or parkland and should be conducted.** Services of qualified resource and reclamation specialists should be retained to assist in selecting suitable sites and routes, assessing environmental sensitivities, and developing protection and mitigation strategies.
- 7) **To expedite resolution of problems, qualified environmental specialists should be retained.** A qualified environmental specialist used to monitor construction and reclamation activities in areas of nonroutine activity can provide direction if problems arise and can complete any follow-up monitoring assessment programs specified by initial planning, regulatory agencies, land administrators, or landowners/occupants.
- 8) **Staff are an integral element of any plan to avoid or minimize disturbance of native prairie or parkland and should be well informed.** The proponent of a project should provide education and training regarding native prairie and parkland issues to staff involved in all phases of the project. It is the shared responsibility of everyone involved in a project to ensure that environmental protection values are well communicated, understood, and implemented.
- 9) **Developments should be located on lands that have been previously disturbed or where long-term land-use commitment is less certain (e.g., tame pasture or cultivated lands) before selecting native prairie or parkland.**
- 10) **Activities should be timed to minimize impacts.** Scheduling can address issues such as coordination with other land users, consideration of selected wildlife species, and optimal use of dry or frozen ground conditions.
- 11) **Disturbances must be reclaimed to an equivalent land capability (Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, 1993).** This would be a comparable native prairie or parkland landscape, unless otherwise specified by the land administrator or landowner. It is recognized that time is an integral part of implementing this principle. The goal is to restore prairie ecosystem function as quickly as possible and to allow for the eventual restoration of the full range of biological structure and diversity.
- 12) **Wind and water erosion must be controlled to protect topsoil resources (Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, 1993).** Erosion control measures

should be considered when establishing methods for construction, interim stabilization and reclamation, and final reclamation.

- 13) **Native plants should be used in reclamation plans where appropriate** (Native Plant Revegetation Guidelines for Alberta, 2001). Reclamation planners should select seed mixes and plant materials that allow the eventual re-establishment of the complete range of native species. To ensure compatibility with surrounding areas, available native plant materials adapted to local growing conditions may be required.
- 14) **Monitoring reclamation is critical to improved performance.** An effective monitoring program should be undertaken to ensure that reclamation objectives are met. Erosion control, revegetation success and sustainability, and weed control are considered key components of any monitoring program. Long-term monitoring of the revegetated areas should be conducted until the native species community has been established. If revegetation objectives are not being achieved within a reasonable time, the program should be evaluated and changed as necessary.

A set of guidelines entitled *Petroleum Industry Activity in Native Prairie and Parkland Areas: Guidelines for Minimizing Surface Disturbance* (Native Prairie Guidelines Working Group, 2001) recommends best practices for the petroleum industry and facilitates implementation of the principles described in this IL. The guidelines document can be found on the EUB Web site <www.eub.gov.ab.ca>.

A companion document, available from the Alberta Environment Information Centre, is *Prairie Oil and Gas: A Lighter Footprint* (Sinton, 2001). It complements the information provided in this IL and the guidelines.

The guiding principles of this IL and the best practices described in the guidelines apply to all disturbances associated with petroleum industry development (see footnote on page 1). Their **implementation is encouraged for development in native prairie and parkland areas on both public and private land.** Although the IL and guidelines were developed specifically for the petroleum industry, the principles and practices are applicable to any other activities proposed for an area of native prairie or parkland.

Direct any questions to Laura Roberts, Alberta Energy and Utilities Board, at (403) 297-7302.

References

Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, 1993, Conservation and Reclamation Regulation 115/93. Available at <<http://www.gov.ab.ca/qp>>.

Native Plant Working Group, 2001, *Native Plant Revegetation Guidelines for Alberta*, H. Sinton, ed. (Edmonton: Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and Alberta Environment), 58 p.

Native Prairie Guidelines Working Group, 2001, *Petroleum Industry Activity in Native Prairie and Parkland Areas: Guidelines for Minimizing Surface Disturbance*. (Calgary: EUB), 38 p. Available from EUB Information Services (403-297-8190) or on the EUB Web site <www.eub.gov.ab.ca>.

Sinton, H. M., 2001, *Prairie Oil and Gas: A Lighter Footprint*. (Edmonton: Alberta Environment), ISBN 0-7785-177-X, 67 p. Available from Alberta Environment Information Centre, 9920-108 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2M4; phone: (780) 422-2079.

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Appendix 1 Map of Natural Regions in Prairie and Parkland Alberta

Native prairie is found largely in the Grassland and Parkland Natural Regions, as well as in the Montane Subregion of Alberta. Remnant sites occur elsewhere in the province. (For further information, see the Natural Regions map in *Native Plant Revegetation Guidelines for Alberta*, Native Plant Working Group, 2001, or on the Web at www.agric.gov.ab.ca/publiclands/nprg/index.html.)



Information on the amount of native vegetation in every quarter section of the Grassland Natural Region can be obtained on the Prairie Conservation Forum Web site www.albertpcf.ab.ca/background.htm.

NATURAL REGIONS IN PRAIRIE AND PARKLAND ALBERTA

GRASSLAND NATURAL REGION

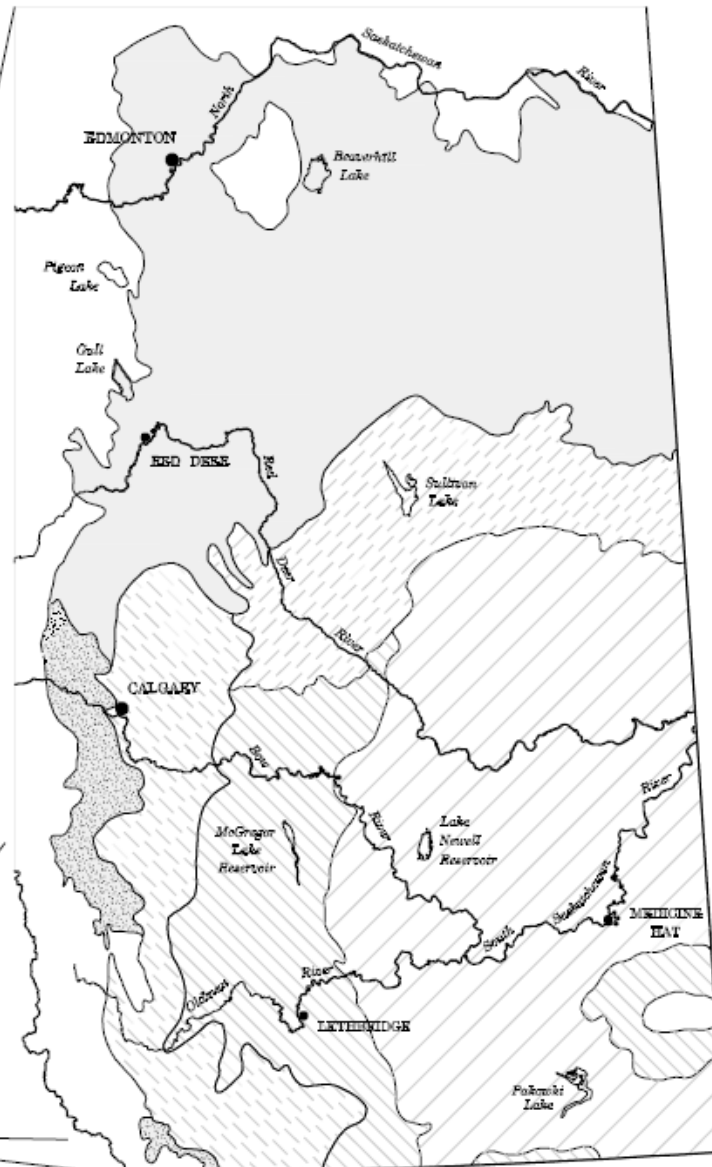
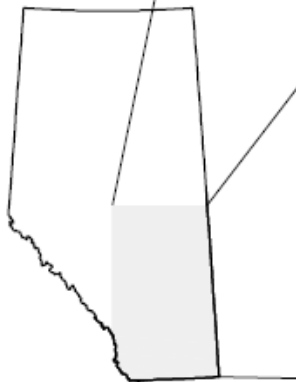
-  Mixedgrass Subregion
-  Foothills Fescue Subregion
-  Northern Fescue Subregion
-  Dry Mixedgrass Subregion

PARKLAND NATURAL REGION

-  Foothills Parkland Subregion
-  Central Parkland Subregion

NOTE: Significant grassland communities also occur at other locations in Alberta, predominantly, but not exclusively, in the Montane and Peace River Parkland Subregions.

PROVINCIAL LOCATION



Appendix F: Recreational Access Regulation

More information on accessing Crown lands for recreation is available at:

Sustainable Resource Development – Lands – Recreational Access to Agricultural Public Land (website)

<http://www.srd.alberta.ca/lands/usingpublicland/recreation/accessagriculturalpublicland/default.aspx>

The Recreation Area Regulation (Alta. Reg. 198/2004) on Canadian Legal Information Institute (website)

<http://www.canlii.org/ab/laws/regu/2004r.198/20041004/whole.html>