
Alberta's Crown Land Vision

Our rich, natural heritage



From the southern prairies to the northern boreal forest to the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, Alberta is blessed with a rich diversity of landscapes and an abundance of resources and biodiversity.

In Alberta's early days, government set public lands aside to be managed by the Crown. Over the years, a parks system was also set up for all Albertans to enjoy. Together, parks and public lands are really one thing - Crown lands managed by government for all Albertans and Indigenous peoples, now and for generations to come.

Government promised Albertans a common-sense conservation plan to protect the environment while recognizing that recreation, economic use and conservation can and should support each other. We will meet this commitment by updating legislation, working with partners, supporting sustainable use of trails and backcountry land, and considering socio-economic and environmental impacts when reviewing major proposals. We will also continue to work with community organizations to protect our air, land, water and wildlife.



Together, we will make sure this rich, natural heritage is preserved for future generations to enjoy. And we will care for the waters and biodiversity of this province in the same way we care for the land, with the understanding that the health of one is connected to the health of the others.



Managing Crown lands for Albertans

Albertans benefit from these diverse landscapes, which cover about 60 per cent of the province, in many different ways. These lands offer the economic development, recreational activities and personal enjoyment communities need to be healthy and strong. They sustain Alberta's resource-rich, biodiverse environment. And they support Indigenous peoples as they practice traditional land uses, including the exercise of Treaty rights.

Effective Crown land management is about working and planning together to meet diverse goals. It means listening to provincial, regional and community perspectives, and finding the approach that works best for everyone. In some areas, a working landscape will be ideal, with a mix of uses and a variety of benefits. In other areas, conservation will be the top priority. We understand that our land, water and other resources are limited, and we know they are valuable not only to Alberta, but to Canada and the world. That's why government needs to plan for the long-term to maintain Alberta's proud tradition of environmental stewardship, and our beautiful landscapes.

The province has a well-established system for allowing for use of Crown lands, including tools such as leases and other authorizations and approvals. Alberta's government understands how much Albertans appreciate that system, so we will make it simpler and more efficient. We have heard from Albertans that the system can be complicated and confusing. They've asked us to untangle the many classifications, rules, and regulations so they're easier to understand. The province has seen increasing demands on our landscapes, and that leads to more conflicts. Albertans want to know that government's land management approach will meet the needs of communities and job creators, without compromising conservation and recreation. They want to benefit from our grasslands, forests, rivers, streams, and lakes through hunting, fishing, trapping, berry and mushroom picking and other activities. Job creators and families want to know what they can do and where they can do it, because they want to live, work and enjoy themselves sustainably. With a clear management approach, and the right set of tools, we can meet that challenge.



Moving from complicated to common sense

Taking a more integrated approach across all Crown lands can help us manage diverse uses and pressures on the landscapes in a less complicated way. This means building a clearer process that's easy to follow and focused on results.

This lines up with requests from Albertans that government cut red tape. One way to do this is to get rid of rules that are out of date, or that overlap with or duplicate other requirements. It also means updating a mix of legislation and regulations that has accumulated over the years.

There are differing approaches to land management that should be unified into one simplified process. One example of unnecessary complication is the number of ways that government classifies Crown land. We need to support a range of outcomes, from conservation to working landscapes, but the tools we have don't let us do this as effectively as we could.

To improve the system, it is also important to focus on the outcomes we want to achieve. Planning for the outcomes we want will lead to better results and more efficient approaches, with more input from Albertans. These will support the innovative approaches Alberta is known for.

Outdoor recreation is another area where we can move to a more common sense approach. There are gaps in how government manages recreation, ensures sustainability and safety, and maintains the natural environment of the places Albertans and visitors so enjoy. Land managers are facing challenges because of increasing demands for recreation and trails on public land. As government works to balance economic development, conservation and recreation on these busy landscapes, we need to improve the ways we manage recreation in the mix. One of the ways Albertans and visitors enjoy Alberta's natural landscapes is through our parks system. This system offers valuable visitor experiences and contributes to meeting our important conservation goals. By managing these areas well, we can enhance their value and sustainability for those who will enjoy and care for them in the future.



Photo Credit: Elston Dzuz

Government considers the work done “on the ground” with Albertans to be a priority. We are committed to working more collaboratively and encouraging innovative approaches. We are grateful for our province’s passionate, knowledgeable volunteer groups and partners, and we want to see how we can improve the way we work with them. We can also explore options for delivering the experiences and services Albertans want to see. Improvements to outdoor recreation will also support tourism in the province. The tourism sector is an important part of Alberta’s economic diversity, encouraging Albertans and other visitors to enjoy our diverse landscapes.



Sustainable operations and funding are challenges for all of us. We have benefited in many ways from our Crown lands but there are costs we need to consider. If we want to share these benefits, we also need to share the costs in a way that is fair to all Albertans.



Government has made commitments to Albertans under our common sense conservation plan. We are committed to moving forward, with a focus on the following.



A clear, understandable system for land use

Government made a commitment to reviewing Alberta Environment and Parks’ legislation to modernize it for the 21st century. Government is also committed to an integrated approach to managing all Crown lands, while respecting our legacy of conservation, parks and protected areas; our heritage of public lands and working landscapes; and the knowledge of Indigenous peoples.



Sustainable funding and partnerships for recreation

Government made a commitment to a trails act and fee framework. Government is also committed to improving how outdoor recreation is managed across all Crown lands to ensure there is a range of sustainable recreation opportunities for Albertans into the future.



Focusing on outcomes and reducing red tape

Government made a commitment to reducing red tape to make life easier for hardworking Albertans and job creators. Government is also committed to focusing on outcomes with integrated and collaborative planning approaches.



We will be coming to talk to you about how we can work together to achieve these commitments. We want to hear your ideas on how we can take advantage of opportunities and meet challenges, today and into the future.