



Special Places:

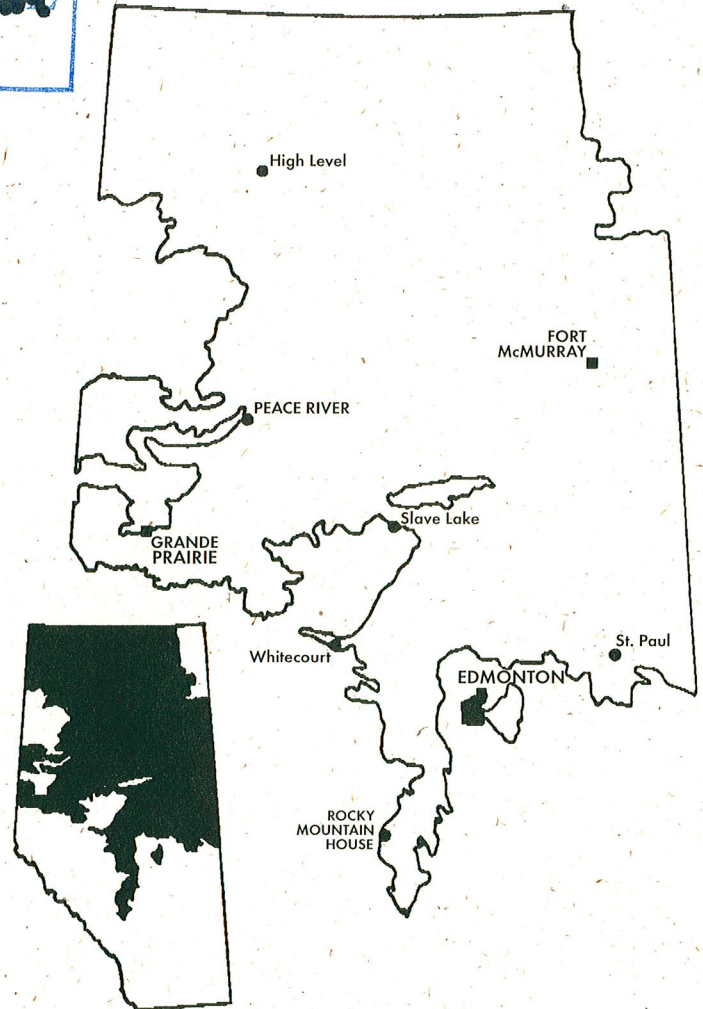
Alberta's Boreal Forest Natural Region

Special Places is a made-in-Alberta strategy to complete a network of landscapes representing the province's six natural regions (20 subregions) by the end of 1998.

Special Places provides the policy, science and process to fill under-represented areas or gaps in Alberta's natural regions, including the Boreal Forest Natural Region.

The Boreal Forest, Alberta's largest natural region, is very diverse. Its six subregions are separated by vegetation, geology and landforms.

The Dry Mixedwood Subregion is characterized by level-to-undulating terrain. The Central Mixedwood Subregion, the largest of Alberta's 20 subregions, has low relief and a level-to-undulating surface. The Wetland Mixedwood Subregion has nearly level to gently rolling topography. The Boreal Highlands Subregion occurs on the sides and tops of plateaus and hill masses. The Peace River Lowlands Subregion consists primarily of fluvial landforms along the lower Peace, Birch and Athabasca rivers including the Peace-Athabasca Delta – one of the largest freshwater deltas in the world. The Subarctic Subregion consists of flat-topped hill systems which are erosional remnants rising above surrounding plain.



Boreal Forest Subregions

- Dry Mixedwood Subregion*
- Central Mixedwood Subregion*
- Wetland Mixedwood Subregion*
- Boreal Highlands Subregion*
- Peace River Lowlands Subregion*
- Subarctic Subregion*

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Special Places

Alberta's Boreal Forest Natural Region

How much land needs to be designated to fill the gaps in the Boreal Forest Natural Region?

Under the Special Places program, 166 significant and highly visible landforms were identified in Alberta. These are called Level 1 Natural History Themes. This information makes it possible to set preservation targets for each type of landform in each subregion. In the Boreal Forest Natural Region, the gap based on Level 1 themes is 3,485 km².

Where are the gaps in the Boreal Forest Natural Region's protected areas network?

The Boreal Forest Natural Region contains six subregions: Dry Mixedwood, Central Mixedwood, Wetland Mixedwood, Boreal Highlands, Peace River Lowlands and Subarctic.

In the Dry Mixedwood Subregion, a number of parks, ecological reserves and natural areas already protect many significant landscapes. However, several landscapes remain under-represented.

In the Central Mixedwood Subregion, under-represented landscapes include hummocky moraine, dune field, exposed slope; protected slope, floor/stream and lake.

Many landscapes in the Wetland Mixedwood and Peace River Subregions are already protected in Wood Buffalo National Park, leaving few under-represented.

Most significant landscapes in the Subarctic Subregion are partially protected. However, additional protected areas are required to achieve complete representation.

In the Boreal Highlands Subregion, protected areas are required to represent landscapes such as hummocky moraine and lake themes.

Will small portions of land in the Boreal Forest Natural Region be considered?

All Special Places nominations, regardless of size, will be considered. The Provincial Coordinating Committee (PCC) will consider smaller areas that significantly contribute to filling gaps in the existing protected areas network and meet Special Places objectives.

How many nominations have been received in the Boreal Forest Natural Region?

As of February, 1997, 52 nominations have been received in the Boreal Forest Natural Region.

What is the time frame for Special Places in the Boreal Forest Natural Region?

The Minister of Environmental Protection has asked the PCC to complete the protected areas network by 1998. The most efficient way to meet this goal is to proceed natural region by natural region. Time needed to complete each natural region depends on the number of nominations and how well they meet Special Places objectives.

The nomination deadline in the Boreal Forest Natural Region was February 28, 1997. It is estimated that nominations in the Boreal Forest Natural Region will be reviewed in late 1997.

How does the Special Places process handle the rights of lease holders on nominated Crown Land?

The Special Places policy states the government will honour existing resource and land-use commitments. Local Committees will ensure the review process represents local rights and interests, including those of lease holders.

How Nominations Will Proceed in the Boreal Forest Natural Region

The Special Places Process

Any Albertan can nominate Crown land for consideration, but nominations undergo a review by a multi-stakeholder Provincial Coordinating Committee (PCC), local volunteer committees and the provincial government before a site can become one of Alberta's Special Places. The following answers some common questions about how the process works.

How are nominations made?

Special Places depends on Albertans' participation and direction. Involvement begins with a public nomination process. Any Albertan can nominate a parcel of Crown land for consideration. Nominations of private land will not be considered unless they are submitted by the landowner and they contribute to filling a gap in the protected areas network. Nomination forms are available from local Environmental Protection offices throughout Alberta.

How are nominations prescreened and narrowed down to candidate sites?

When a Special Places nomination is submitted, it's only the first step – nominated sites are not automatically considered candidate sites.

Candidate sites, those with a high probability of meeting the preservation goal, are identified in a pre-screening process. The prescreening is completed by an Interdepartmental Directors Committee and reviewed by the PCC.

Existing commitments on candidate sites, such as leases, will continue to be honoured. However, interim protection measures, which limit new activities or developments, may be applied to candidate sites at this stage to ensure their integrity is not compromised during the review process.

What is the Provincial Coordinating Committee (PCC)?

The Provincial Coordinating Committee is the multi-stakeholder group that provides overall direction and awareness for Special Places. Representing the broad interests of Albertans, the PCC reviews nominated sites against Special Places policy, principles and science. The Committee then recommends to the Minister of Environmental Protection which sites should become candidates and be reviewed by local committees.

After the prescreening, what is the review process for candidate sites?

After the candidate sites are identified, they proceed to Local Committees for further consideration.

Local Committees (LCs) are established regionally to review candidate sites. Municipal governments in the Boreal Forest Natural Region will be offered the opportunity to host and chair LCs in the region as well as assist in defining the membership. LCs have about four to six months to make recommendations to the PCC. The PCC then reviews and makes recommendations for designation to the Minister of Environmental Protection.

What is the role of Local Committees?

The volunteer Local Committees contribute site-specific management principles and recommend boundary options and appropriate land-use activities. Made up of local stakeholders, these committees will consider broad local input in their recommendations to the PCC. Local Committees' memberships can include local elected officials, tenure holders, industry and various local interest groups. If the Local Committee cannot support the candidate site, it will not continue through the designation process.

For More Information . . .

This fact sheet is one of several available sources of information about Special Places. The Special Places "Policy and Implementation Plan" covers the Special Places process. You can find information about the natural regions and Special Places in the booklet "A Framework for Alberta's Special Places" and the brochure "Preserving Our Heritage, Protecting Our Future." If you need copies of these publications, contact the Alberta Environmental Protection Information Centre at (403) 422-2079. If you're calling from outside Edmonton, dial 310-0000 and ask to be connected to (403) 422-2079.

For general information about Special Places, call (403) 427-0047. If you're calling from outside Edmonton, call the government Rite operator toll free at 310-0000 and ask for 427-0047.

For more information about Special Places in the Boreal Forest Natural Region, contact either of the following:

Joe Prusak in Fort McMurray by phone at (403) 623-5488 or by fax at (403) 623-5239

Ron Davis in Peace River by phone at (403) 624-6402 or by fax at (403) 624-6455

If you are calling long distance, dial the government Rite operator toll free at 310-0000 and ask for the phone number to which you want to be connected.

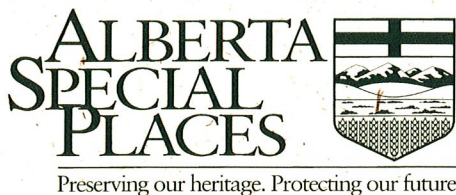
You can also get more information by writing to:

**Alberta Environmental Protection
Corporate Management Service
11th Floor, South Petroleum Plaza
9915-108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2G8**

To read about Alberta's Special Places on the Internet, visit the Environmental Protection Web site at

<http://www.gov.ab.ca/~env/>

*click on the Lands icon and select Special Places from the menu displayed.



A LEGACY IN THE MAKING

