

Public Land Management



Southern Alberta's Eastern Slopes

Southern Alberta's Eastern Slopes are highly valued landscapes for their natural resources and biodiversity and are the source of most of the region's drinking water. Indigenous peoples have used this area since time immemorial and it continues to be culturally significant to several First Nations communities for a variety of uses. Forestry, energy and mining, tourism, recreation, and grazing are among the primary uses around rural communities in this part of the province. Growing population pressure and the diverse interests that converge on this landscape have led to a need to focus resource and environmental management for its long-term health and use.

Managing this part of Alberta has implications far beyond its borders. The Castle, Livingstone, and Porcupine Hills are subregions in the Eastern Slopes that form important components of the Crown of the Continent landscape. The Crown of the Continent includes the headwaters of the Saskatchewan, Missouri and Columbia River systems and is critical for providing clean water for downstream use. The area is also known internationally for its rich biodiversity, iconic views, and diversity of climate regimes and ecosystems.

Headwaters protection, reducing wildfire risk, conserving biodiversity, and balancing multiple uses on this landscape is described in the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan. Understanding the interplay of values, how the subregions connect, and how to accommodate an appropriate mix of uses and activities are important dimensions of landscape management. In recognition of these multiple values, the Castle area became part of the province's network of conservation areas, and the Livingstone and Porcupine Hills continue to be multiple use Public Lands.

Livingstone and Porcupine Hills Public Land Use Zones

Public Land Use Zones (PLUZs) assist in managing commercial and recreational uses and support other planning outcomes, especially where there is the need to designate and manage motorized trails. They allow for multiple uses, including motorized recreation. Both the Land Footprint Management Plan and the Recreation Management Plan require the PLUZs to designate motorized access, where permitted.

Will there be a change to motorized recreation on public lands?

A designated motorized trail system will be established within the Livingstone and Porcupine Hills areas. Motorized recreation will be permitted on designated trails in areas best able to accommodate motorized use while providing desirable experiences.

Land Footprint Management Plan

The South Saskatchewan Regional Plan identified the need for human footprint planning to minimize disturbance from all activities in the Livingstone-Porcupine Hills. The Land Footprint Management Plan (LFMP) considers environmental, social and economic values with a goal to ensure responsible land-use on Alberta's public lands.

Increasing demand for motorized access in the area has led to the need for better management of land use activities to provide the social benefits appreciated by residents and visitors. The plan establishes motorized access limits that protect headwaters, biodiversity and other values. Approaches contained in the plan include designating trails within appropriate limits, reducing conflict of multiple land uses, creating enhanced opportunities for Indigenous peoples to participate in land-use management approaches while upholding access to traditional lands and the ability to practice their traditional way of life, and improving opportunities for all forms of recreation.

The plan also provides a suite of Integrated Land Management (ILM) tools that will improve management of these valuable public lands. ILM tools enable all sectors to reduce footprint, coordinate approaches to reduce impacts on other users, and to use land efficiently. Footprint management planning in the PLUZs requires a proactive and coordinated approach led by provincial regulators working in collaboration with Indigenous peoples, stakeholders and the public to manage footprint to sustainable levels.

The Livingstone and Porcupine Hills are working landscapes that support sustainable resource use and recreation activities. The LFMP provides clarity to land-use decision makers on the management intent to minimize footprint by increasing cooperation and sharing among resource agencies, increasing the use of ILM tools, which may reduce costs through shared infrastructure and the coordination of linear corridors, and reducing industry's liability from random recreation use of infrastructure that may not be suitable for that purpose.

PORCUPINE HILLS AND LIVINGSTONE
Proposed Public Land Use Zones (PLUZ)

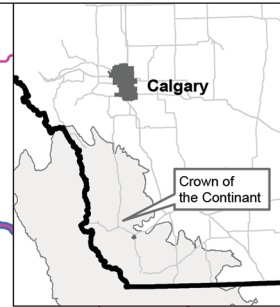
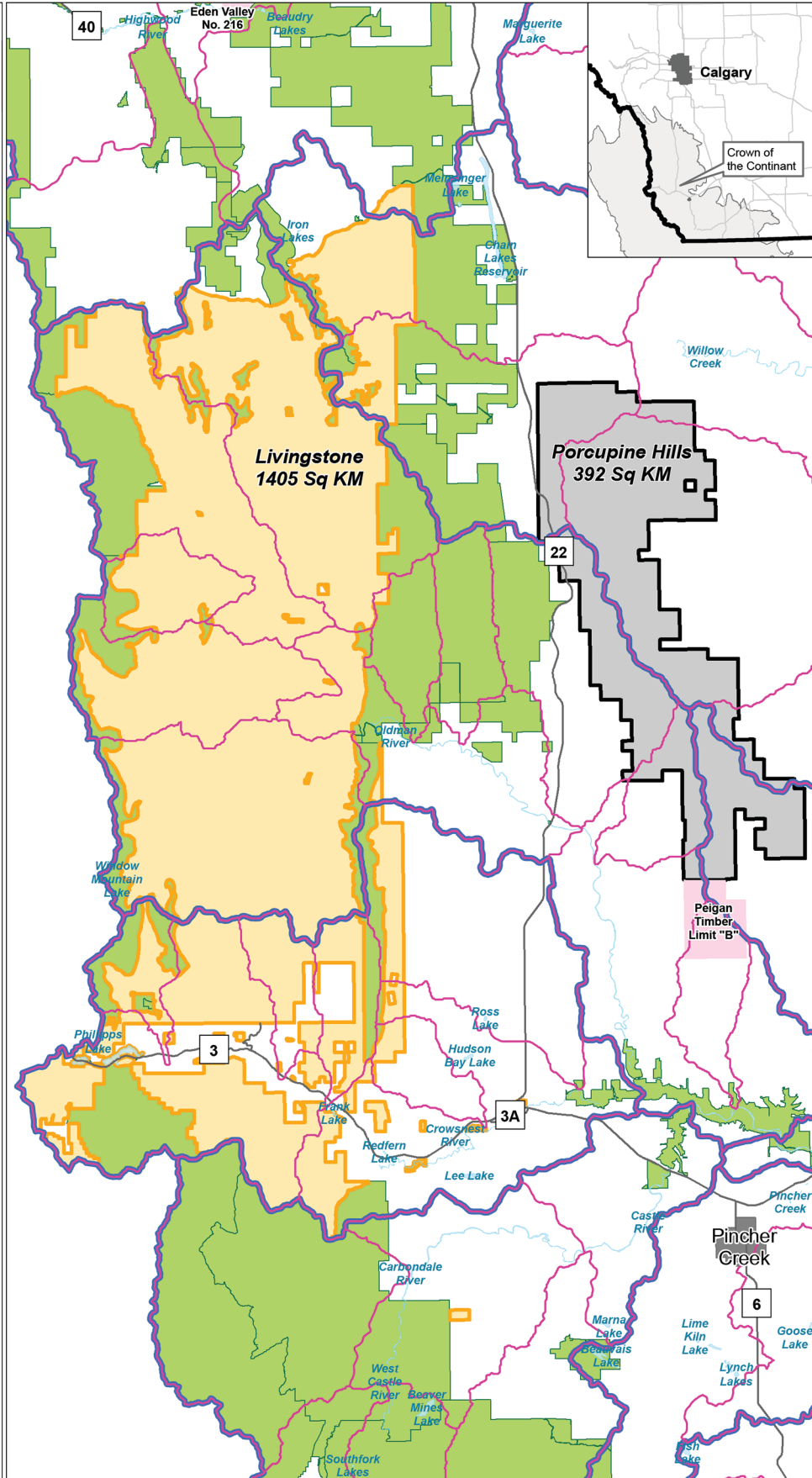


Public Land Use Zones

- Porcupine Hills
- Livingstone

Other Mapping Features

- Hydrological Unit Code 10
- Hydrological Unit Code 8
- Primary Highway
- Hydrography
- Town
- First Nations Reserve
- Parks and Protected Areas (Existing and Proposed)



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Recreation Management Plan

Albertans value nature and support the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan's objectives for biodiversity and ecosystems. The goal of the Recreation Management Plan (RMP) is to provide positive experiences and opportunities for outdoor recreation while minimizing environmental impact. The RMP balances the needs of various recreational activities to create a space for them to co-exist on the landscape. A designated trail system reduces risk for all users by ensuring everyone is aware of what activities are occurring and where. It also provides land managers with the ability to manage incompatible uses.

The RMP focuses on reducing human footprint to sustainable limits while recognizing the value of outdoor recreation and access to natural spaces for the mental and physical well-being of Albertans. Better trail design, ongoing maintenance and monitoring of recreation infrastructure will provide improved outdoor recreation experiences for Albertans and visitors. Planning, stewardship and good trail design and trail placement will improve relationships between Indigenous people, recreationists, other land users and landowners. Collaborative implementation of the RMP will provide benefits to all land users.

The plan recognizes that outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism are significant contributors to local, regional and provincial economies. Outdoor recreation and tourism-based businesses diversify local economies and rely on a well-managed system of recreation opportunities to grow and thrive. The plan will provide greater clarity and certainty for industry and agricultural land users on where and how Albertans and visitors are accessing these areas. It will also enable opportunities for nature-based tourism where desired by local communities.

Conservation Areas

The two parks established in the Castle area are the Castle Provincial Park and the Castle Wilderness Provincial Park. The Castle parks are to be managed as protected areas that allow Albertans and visitors to experience this unique ecological area. The Castle Provincial Park will provide Albertans and visitors the primary location for front-country nature-based experiences and also provide access to park services including educational and interpretive programs, information and visitor support. The Castle Wildlands Provincial Park will focus on low-impact backcountry and wilderness experiences including trails and backcountry huts.

Future Possibilities

Public lands are a tremendous provincial resource that the government must manage for the greater public good by accommodating an appropriate mix of land uses and activities. The draft Livingstone-Porcupine Hills Land Footprint and Recreation Management Plans are a vital step in that direction.

First Nations and public consultation has begun on the draft plans and will continue until 4:00 p.m. on Thursday April 26, 2018. Your feedback is important to us as we continue to understand how cumulative effects will shape our social, environmental and economic values on this multi-use landscape. This is a shared responsibility!

Engagement HQ Address:

talkaep.alberta.ca

Deadline to participate:

4:00 p.m. Thursday April 26, 2018