A scenic landscape photograph of a river flowing through a valley. The river is in the foreground, with a rocky bed and clear water. The banks are lined with green vegetation and trees. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains under a clear blue sky.

**A Policy for
Resource
Management
of the
Eastern
Slopes
Revised 1984**

Alberta

A Policy for Resource Management of the Eastern Slopes

Revised 1984

Edmonton
1984

Alberta
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

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NOTE:

A Policy for Resource Management of the Eastern Slopes, Revised 1984 applies to lands and resources vested in the Crown in right of Alberta. Neither the Eastern Slopes Policy, nor any of the plans developed pursuant to that policy, is intended to apply to privately owned land.

Addendum

This 2023 version document used the revised 1984 document to create a digital PDF document with an Addendum, which incorporates the Coal Categories from “A Coal Development Policy for Alberta” (1976) into the “A Policy for Resource Management of the Eastern Slopes,” Revised 1984.

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PREFACE

A Policy for Resource Management of the Eastern Slopes, published in 1977, provided for a range of opportunities in the region in keeping with the provincial social, economic and environmental goals of the day. Since its introduction, the policy has served as the regional base for an active program and more detailed sub-regional planning designed to deliver the benefits of the area to all Albertans.

During the past several years, the administrative aspects of the policy have been reviewed in detail and certain revisions have been made in order to keep the policy current and consistent.

The 1984 revision is intended to reflect the realities of the economic situation in Alberta, and to provide for the maximum delivery of the full range of values and opportunities in this important region. Given the high scenic and recreation values of the area, particular emphasis is placed on the need for the development of a strong tourist industry in the region during the next two decades. Such development must rely heavily on the private sector for success.

The policy presents the Government of Alberta's resource management policy for the public lands and resources within the region. It is intended to be a guide to resource managers, industry and publics having responsibilities or interests in the area rather than a regulatory mechanism. Resource potentials and opportunities for development are identified with a view to assisting in the economic progress of Alberta. The policy is sufficiently flexible so that all future proposals for land use and development may be considered. No legitimate proposals will be categorically rejected. Should a proposal not be in keeping with the provisions of the policy for that area, alternative means will be explored for accommodating the proposal in a more appropriate location in the region.

The on-going integrated resource plans will make the policy work — to provide opportunities and stimulate economic growth and security while maintaining the key watershed and recreation values of the area.

I am confident that the Eastern Slopes Policy will continue to serve as a strong guide for the future in this important region of Alberta.

Hon. Don Sparrow
Associate Minister
Public Lands & Wildlife

Addendum

Published in 1977 and revised in 1984, the Eastern Slopes Policy continues to benefit Albertans by providing strategic direction for this iconic landscape. The Eastern Slopes are the headwaters of Alberta's major river systems, and support wildlife, fisheries and unique vegetation communities and landforms. This remarkable area is also highly valued by Indigenous communities and has been an integral part of many traditional practices. In addition to its environmental and traditional value, the Eastern Slopes support important economic and social activities such as farming and ranching, forestry, recreation and tourism, enriching the lives of Albertans from all walks of life.

This 2023 version of the Eastern Slopes Policy remains unchanged from 1984, with one exception — the addition of the Coal Categories from "A Coal Development Policy for Alberta" (1976).

Hon. Sonya Savage
Minister of Environment and Protected Areas

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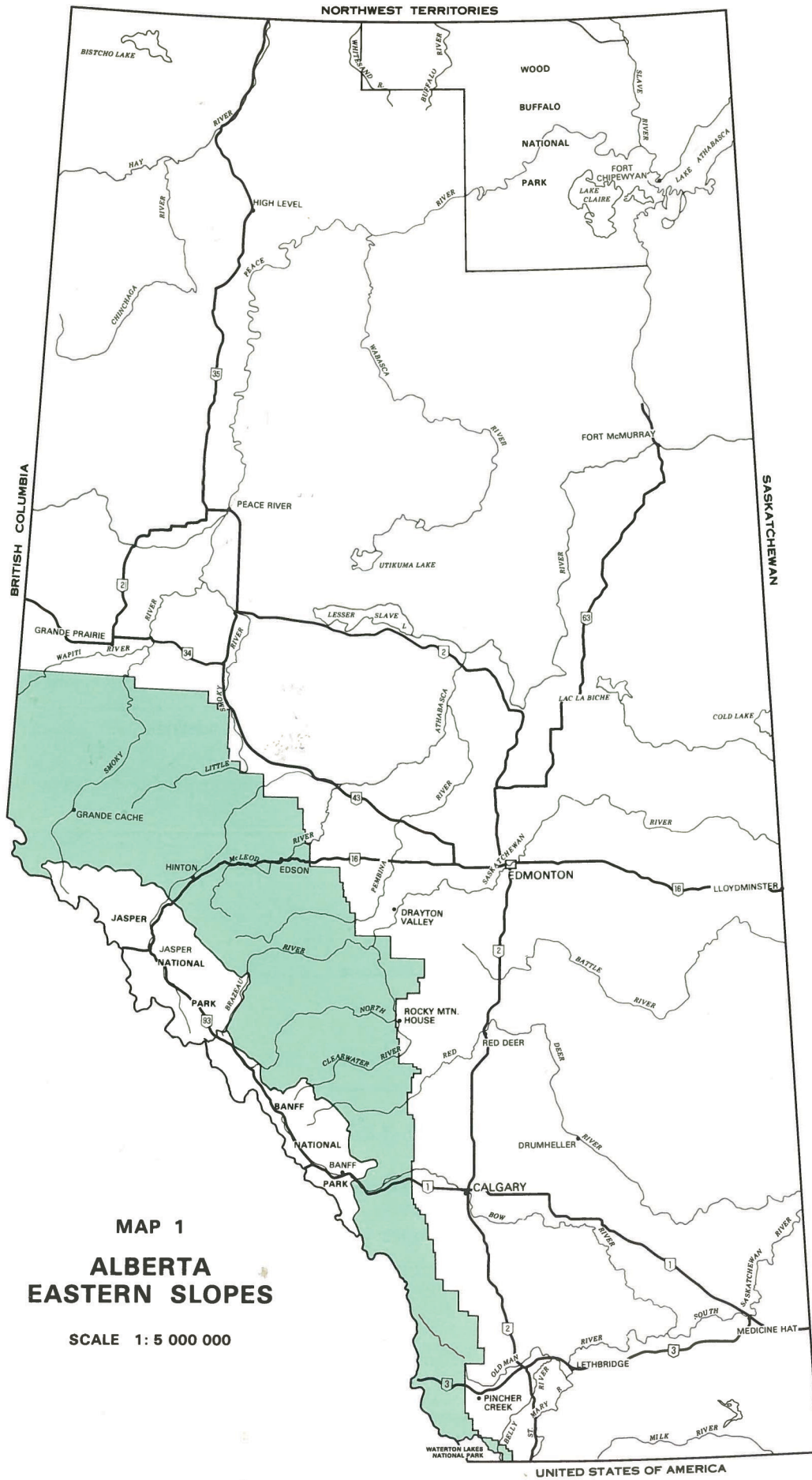
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MAP 1
ALBERTA
EASTERN SLOPES

SCALE 1: 5 000 000

Introduction

MANAGEMENT IN THE EASTERN SLOPES — PAST AND PRESENT

The Eastern Slopes of Alberta's Rocky Mountains covers an area of approximately 90 000 square kilometres of mainly forest-covered mountains and foothills. The region possesses a great wealth of renewable and non-renewable resources — water, scenery, timber, forage, wildlife, fisheries and mineral resources — the majority of which lie upon or beneath public lands. Demands for use of these resources have increased at a rapid rate over recent years, making it more evident that the resource base of the Eastern Slopes is not unlimited. Growing pressures for resources and land in the area have led to conflicts in land allocation and to a rising concern for the protection of environmental quality and the management of this extremely important watershed region.

To deal with issues and concerns over the years, the development of resource and land use policies for the Eastern Slopes has passed through several stages. The Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board, which operated under joint federal-provincial legislation between 1948 and 1973, was effective in providing a watershed management policy and planning framework for the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve — the reserve recognized as the critical headwaters region for the prairie provinces. The Board analyzed the watershed and hydrologic characteristics of the area and provided priorities and guidelines for the management of renewable and non-renewable resources to optimize water quality and quantity.

The establishment of the Green Area in 1948 also gave policy direction for Eastern Slopes management. The Green Area, in which most of the Eastern Slopes region lies, defines the extent of those lands withdrawn from settlement. The majority of the lands in the area are public lands on which farming and residential development have been prohibited. The Rocky Mountain Forest Reserve was formally established by the Forest Reserve Act, 1964, for the conservation of forests and other vegetation, and the maintenance of conditions

favourable to optimal water supply.

In 1970, in response to rapidly growing demand for resources, the Alberta Government began two planning studies in the Eastern Slopes — the Foothills Resource Allocation Study and the Hinton Yellowhead Regional Land Use Study. These studies initiated a planning process designed to identify resource uses for land units based on an evaluation of resource capability, present land use, economics and demand.

In 1973, the Environmental Conservation Authority (ECA) conducted hearings into land use and resource development in the Eastern Slopes in order to identify the views and concerns of the public of Alberta. Briefs presented to the hearings, and the results of a public opinion survey, strongly emphasized watershed and public recreation priorities and the need for an integrated resource policy and land use planning for the area. The importance of beginning such a program was stressed throughout the 232 recommendations of the ECA which were submitted to government in 1974. On July 18, 1975, the government announced a policy for integrated resource management in the Eastern Slopes.

In addition, the Eastern Slopes Interdepartmental Planning Committee was established in 1975 to make recommendations on an integrated resource planning approach for the management of this strategic region of Alberta. Based on these recommendations, the government approved the original policy, published in July 1977 as *A Policy for Resource Management of the Eastern Slopes*, to ensure that all public lands and resources in the Eastern Slopes are protected, managed or developed according to a philosophy of integrated resource management.

Reviews of, and revisions to, the policy will ensure that it continues to be an effective tool for the government to respond to the needs and wants of Albertans and their concerns for protection of the Eastern Slopes.

FRAMEWORK OF PROVINCIAL NATURAL RESOURCE GOALS

Provincial goals for the various resource sectors provide the framework for developing more detailed regional resource objectives. The provincial goals outlined here are those that are relevant to the Eastern Slopes and apply only to public lands and resources. They are only part of a much larger picture. Provincial social, economic and environmental goals will greatly influence the achievement of the resource objectives. However, as the Eastern Slopes is a very large area and one which is important to many of the social, economic and environmental aspects of life in Alberta, the achievement of the regional resource objectives is important to the province as a whole.

The environment of land, water, vegetation and wildlife must be managed totally and not as separate elements. Although the provincial goals and regional objectives are defined individually, the management required to achieve any one objective does consider the many interrelationships with the environment.

Because the demands are so high, there is often a competition for the same land and same resources in the Eastern Slopes. Thus, not all goals will be achieved to the same degree of success in all areas.

The following goals relate to the natural resources of the region, and are not presented in any particular order of priority.

Water Management

To ensure a continuous, reliable supply of clean water to meet the needs of Albertans and interprovincial users now and in the future.

Wildlife

To provide a variety of outdoor recreational and commercial opportunities based on wildlife resources for the benefit and enjoyment of Albertans.

Fisheries

To provide a variety of outdoor recreational

opportunities based on fisheries resources for the benefit and enjoyment of Albertans.

Recreation

To provide both private and public recreation opportunities that will meet the needs of Albertans and also enhance the vacation experiences of visitors to the province.

Timber

To provide the optimal continuous contribution to the economy by the forest-based industries consistent with sound environmental practices recognizing other uses of the forest.

Rangeland

To provide a properly managed forage base of the rangelands for use by wildlife and domestic livestock.

Agriculture

To encourage the optimal development of the renewable resources for the production, processing and marketing of agricultural products for an expanding domestic and export market.

Tourism

To encourage the provision of a diverse range of private and public sector tourism facilities, attractions, accommodations and services capable of meeting increasing demands for leisure and business-related opportunities.

Mineral Resources

To encourage exploration and development of all mineral resources to meet the needs of Albertans now and in the future.

Cultural and Ecological Resources

To ensure that significant features of archaeological, ecological or historical value are identified, protected and managed for scientific, educational and recreational benefits.

DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

The *Policy for Resource Management of the Eastern Slopes, Revised 1984* is organized into two major parts:

1. Policy statements define the management intentions for the region. These statements reflect the priorities for resource management that will ensure that the special benefits from this region will continue to be provided to Albertans.
2. The regional plan provides more specific resource management direction. Resource objectives that can be achieved in the region are stated. Zoning maps and descriptions indicate where the objectives or groups of objectives can be met. Within the zone descriptions, the compatibility of a number of land use activities and the objectives generally to be achieved from the zone are

identified. In addition, a complete description of how the policy statements and the regional plan will be implemented has been included in this revised edition of the document. Guidelines for specific aspects of resource management affecting the region have been included for both the Eastern Slopes Policy statements and the regional plan.

This revised document has been organized to show the relationship among broad provincial goals, policy statement for resource management of a special region — the Eastern Slopes — and the regional plan, which provides the initial level defining what, where and how resources will be managed to meet parts of the provincial goals.

Eastern Slopes Policy

The Eastern Slopes Policy defines the emphasis for realizing resource opportunities in the area. Policy statements describe:

- The management intentions for the Eastern Slopes and the direction which is required to assure that the character of the slopes will continue to provide the special benefits the region has to offer Albertans.
- The policy guidelines which identify the

most important resource opportunities of the region and the major priorities to be considered in the management of the Eastern Slopes.

- The general procedure to assure that the desired direction and the policy guidelines are recognized in the on-going management of the public lands and resources in the Eastern Slopes.

MANAGEMENT INTENTIONS FOR THE EASTERN SLOPES

Public concerns for the future of the Eastern Slopes have centred on the need for government policy which would recognize those land areas providing different types of benefits. The public has also strongly requested that government employ a comprehensive and integrated approach in managing the natural resources in the region.

Information from the Foothills Resource Allocation Study, combined with public concerns and government objectives and priorities, has led to the recognition that, within the Eastern Slopes, different intensities of land use zones are required to ensure that the desired qualities are protected and that the resources are used effectively to provide benefits to Albertans.

These broad areas are conceptual in nature; however, they are clearly defined by their intents.

BROAD AREAS	INTENTS
Protection	To provide the highest level of protection for those areas which are known to form the unique character of the Eastern Slopes.
Resource Management	To foster wise mixed use of the natural resources to achieve specific goals and objectives.
Development	To recognize existing and provide for future site-specific development.

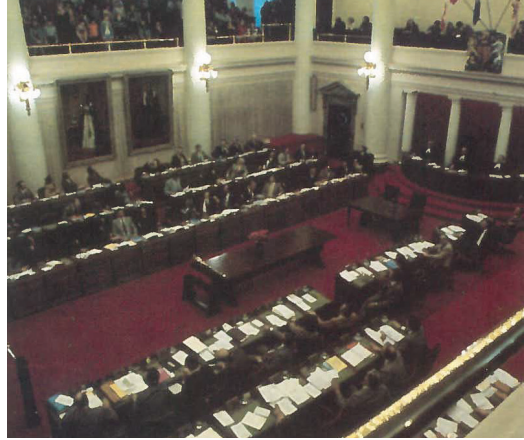


South Kakwa River

POLICY GUIDELINES FOR THE EASTERN SLOPES

To achieve the policy intents for this special part of Alberta, and also to gain benefits from all the natural resources, the government will follow these basic policy guidelines:

- The highest priority in the overall management of the Eastern Slopes is placed on watershed management. Recreation and tourism benefits from the private and public sectors are also extremely important.
- The natural resources of the Eastern Slopes will be developed, managed and protected in a manner consistent with principles of conservation and environmental protection.
- The uniqueness of the Eastern Slopes, due to its aesthetic qualities and combination of



environments, will be maintained.

- The recreation resources of the mountains and foothills will be maintained while increasing the opportunities for Albertans to enjoy this unique region.
- The management of renewable resources is the long-term priority in the Eastern Slopes. Non-renewable resource developments will be encouraged in areas where this priority can be maintained.
- Decisions for development, management and protection of natural resources in the Eastern Slopes will be based on an integrated resource planning system.
- All levels of integrated resource planning will include a public involvement program.



IMPLEMENTATION

The management intentions and policy guidelines for the Eastern Slopes are incorporated into the programs the provincial agencies use to manage Alberta's natural resources. The government has determined that public lands and resources will be protected, managed and developed with a philosophy of integrated resource management. According to this philosophy, the process for combining the intents and policy guidelines for the detailed management of the Eastern Slopes involves the allocation of resources on a regional scale through the use of a regional plan. Generally, this is a broad plan which defines what is to be achieved, where the protection, management and development emphasis will be, and what resource objectives might be met in the different parts of the region.

The regional plan considers provincial natural resource goals within the intents and policy guidelines of the Eastern Slopes, other provincial policies and goals, and information on resource capabilities, uses and demands. The plan gives broad direction to the resource management agencies and a further commitment to the public of what benefits can be expected from this region.

The management intents for the Eastern Slopes Policy are also implemented through other policies and guidelines. Some of the more relevant of these are as follows.

Above left: Provincial Legislative Assembly

Above Right: Energy and renewable resources (Gas plant and cutblock)

Below: Managing the forest (Cutblock)



1. Integrated Resource Planning System

As part of the concept of integrated resource management, it is desired that decisions on the allocation and use of public lands and resources be made through an integrated resource planning system. This system has been formally developing since the completion of the Eastern Slopes Policy in 1977.

Integrated resource plans completed for the Eastern Slopes will be approved by a provincial Cabinet committee.

2. Public Involvement Process

The purpose of the public involvement process is to provide a means for involving the interested public of Alberta in integrated resource planning in an appropriate way. The government believes that this results in better and more acceptable plans for public lands and resources.

One level of public involvement is the Alberta Integrated Planning Advisory Committee which provides advice to the Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife on provincial integrated resource planning issues. The committee is composed of representatives from major provincial interest groups concerned with public land and resource uses. These public interest groups are also consulted to provide their perspective at the working level.

Other concerned groups and individuals are also recognized and given the opportunity to be involved and informed during the integrated resource planning process.

A successful public involvement program allows government to learn from the concerned public, consider its views and keep it informed on a continuing basis. This provides better and more acceptable integrated resource plans for Alberta's public lands and resources.



A protected area (Willmore Wilderness)

3. Existing Legislation

A *Policy for Resource Management of the Eastern Slopes, Revised 1984* was prepared with the understanding that it would be implemented within the terms of existing legislation and regulations by those government departments with appropriate administrative responsibilities. In addition, the lands affected by the policy were not to be considered exempt from requirements established by other legislation.

4. Other Government Policy Statements

Extensive areas of the Eastern Slopes designated for long-term development or large-scale resource development are frequently

recognized by government policy statements. Examples are *The Policy for Recreation Development of Kananaskis Country*, *A Coal Development Policy for Alberta* and the *Fish and Wildlife Policy for Alberta*. The application of all such policies which have implications for the protection, management and development of public land and resources in the region must conform with the intent of the Eastern Slopes Policy.

5. Preliminary Disclosure

A preliminary disclosure is a means by which both the private and public sectors may make major development proposals, on a *confidential* basis, to government. Through preliminary review, the government may indicate whether it has objections "in principle" to a proposal's form, timing, location or any other essential feature. No objection in principle of a major development proposal resulting from preliminary disclosure constitutes approval for the filing of necessary applications and documents as required under controlling legislation.

6. Request for Proposals

A "request for proposals" is a means by which the government may play a more active role in identifying and directing the development of major resources facilities, particularly those involving the recreation sector in the Eastern Slopes. The request-for-proposals approach has been used in recent years in Alberta as the decision mechanism for major resource developments such as integrated forest products operations. This approach has allowed the government to identify key requirements prior to receiving proposals, and ensures that the best proposal, rather than the first, is accepted.

The request-for-proposals approach handles development concepts from either the private sector or government departments. Integrated resource planning will identify areas and sites having the potential for various types of developments. The request-for-proposals approach recognizes, however, the need to maintain the preliminary disclosure process as the means of reacting to development concepts from the private sector.

7. Referral Review

In the case of major developments and site-specific dispositions of public lands and resources in the Eastern Slopes, the requests are subjected to intensive referral review procedures. Referral procedures and information requirements have been defined for a number of types of major developments and site-specific requests. The approach is consistent with the shared decision-making philosophy of integrated resource management.

Regional Plan for the Eastern Slopes

The regional plan takes direction from the provincial natural resource goals and the Eastern Slopes Policy. The plan combines the direction with information on broad resource capabilities, present land uses and demands. (The Foothills Resource Allocation Study and the Environmental Conservation Authority hearings provided a significant information base for the development of the plan.) Thus, the plan is able to link the general provincial direction and ideals with the specifics of the resource base of the Eastern Slopes. This gives clearer direction to the government agencies involved with the management of the natural resources of the region. The regional plan is the first stage and one part of integrated resource management for the Eastern Slopes.

The regional plan considers three major questions:

- What are the main resource objectives that will be striven for in this region in order to meet some of the various needs of Albertans?

- Where are these objectives going to be met and where are the development, management and protection intents, vital to the Eastern Slopes Policy, to be achieved?
- How are the various resource uses going to occur together in the region in order to ensure that the policy guidelines for the Eastern Slopes are being followed?

The plan has three main parts:

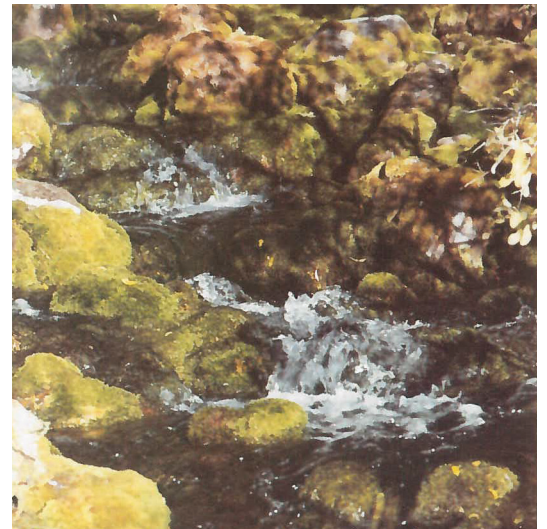
1. Regional Objectives, which outlines those objectives that will be striven for in various parts of the region.
2. Regional Land Use Zones, as shown on the three map sheets in the back-cover pocket, which describes the resource objectives that might be achieved in each zone and the intent of the zone in terms of development, resource management or protection.
3. Implementation, which describes how the regional plan is to be implemented through both the more detailed integrated resource planning and the Table of Compatible Activities.

REGIONAL OBJECTIVES

Identification of objectives for each resource sector is necessary in order to determine what range of benefits can possibly be gained from the region's resources. For the regional plan, the objectives have been developed from broad information gathered during studies such as the Foothills Resource Allocation Study and through the continuing management programs of the departments involved in the management of the Eastern Slopes. The objectives, however, have not been modified in terms of how one affects another in any particular area. Thus, although it is expected that all objectives have a high possibility of being achieved in the Eastern Slopes, not all objectives will necessarily be achieved in all areas. If the objective is not achievable in a particular zone, every attempt will be made to accommodate it in another area.

Watershed Management

1. To manage and develop natural resources in the region to maintain or increase the volume of water yield and the natural timing of surface and sub-surface discharge.
2. To manage headwaters in the region to maintain the recharge capabilities and protect critical fisheries habitat.



A source of prairie water (Kananaskis Country creek)

3. To manage intensively the South Saskatchewan River Basin for water supply stability.
4. To manage the North Saskatchewan and Athabasca river watersheds to maintain natural flows and provide the option for future increases in water yield through intensive management.

Wildlife

The following are the general objectives for wildlife management. More specific population goals will be identified in the *Status of the Fish and Wildlife Resource in Alberta* and the subsequent detailed species management plans.

1. To allocate benefits derived from the wildlife resources with priority to recreation benefits to Albertans followed by economic benefits gained from various uses of wildlife through tourism.
2. To ensure that wildlife populations are protected from severe decline and that viable populations are maintained.
3. To identify very rare, scarce or special forms of outdoor recreation opportunities from wildlife and to ensure that access to these opportunities continues to be available.
4. To ensure that significant local resource shortfalls between demand and supply are addressed regionally.
5. To maintain wildlife on the basis of fundamental ecological principles.



Mountain wildlife (Mountain goat)

Fisheries

1. To protect aquatic habitat and ensure high water quality.
2. To establish optimal instream flow for fish through modification of land-water use practices.
3. To recognize sport fishing as the principal use of the fishery resources in the Eastern Slopes.
4. To maintain naturally reproducing salmonid (trout, char, grayling and whitefish) populations in the region and to expand these fish resources into presently vacant and appropriate aquatic habitat.
5. To supplement or enhance game fish stocks by stocking when natural reproduction does not occur or is limited.

Recreation

1. MAJOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES
To establish recreation development opportunities to be provided by the private and public sectors based on present and future recreation demand. To develop and manage a diverse range of resource-based recreation developments.
2. CAMPING FACILITIES
 - Auto Access
To increase the number and scope of designated camping opportunities by expanding existing facilities and developing new sites.
 - Group Camping
To increase group camping facilities throughout the Eastern Slopes.
 - Remote Camping
To increase the number of camping sites accessible on foot, by horse, and by off-highway vehicles (OHV).
3. TRAILS
 - Land-Based
To increase the number of kilometres of long-distance trails in the region for hiking, skiing, horse-riding and OHV use.
 - Water-Based
To designate and manage water-based trails to provide opportunities for a variety of activities such as canoeing, power boating, kayaking and rafting.
4. DAY USE
To increase extensive day-use sites, e.g., rest stops, picnic areas and viewing points.
5. VISITOR SERVICES
To provide for a variety of trails oriented toward nature and historical appreciation and understanding resource management. To increase public awareness toward the preservation of representative and unique features of natural and/or cultural significance for interpretation, education and appreciation throughout the Eastern Slopes.
6. WILDERNESS
To maintain areas of wilderness or primitive character.
7. WATER ACCESS
To develop and manage a range of facilities and services to provide access to various water bodies throughout the region.
8. FISH AND WILDLIFE
Within the context of the *Status of the Fish and Wildlife Resource in Alberta*, to establish fish and wildlife outdoor recreation objectives and priorities related to the supply and the present and projected demands.

Cultural and Ecological Resources

To protect both representative and unique areas of natural or cultural significance for the recreational, scientific and educational use of Albertans.

Tourism

1. To encourage the provision of a wide variety of tourism opportunities and services in the Eastern Slopes.
 2. To encourage the development of tourism opportunities and services capable of operation on a year-round basis.
 3. To support the provision of tourism opportunities and services by the private sector wherever feasible and to minimize the occurrence of public sector competition with private sector developments for specific tourism markets.
 4. To ensure the provision of an adequate land base for tourism activities while maintaining
5. To maintain the environmental and aesthetic qualities of the Eastern Slopes, while expanding tourism opportunities in the area through:
 - grouping tourism facilities and services where feasible (recognizing the need for unique siting and scenic requirements of particular types of facilities)
 - ensuring the careful design of facilities to limit impact on the environment
 - encouraging environmentally-conscious operation of facilities and services after their completion



Recreational use of the land (Outfitting)

Timber

1. BOW/CROW FOREST

Crowsnest Portion

To increase the sustained-yield timber supply available to quota holders and the general public through an expanded permanent forest land base consistent with optimal forest land allocation.

Southern Bow Portion (Kananaskis Country)

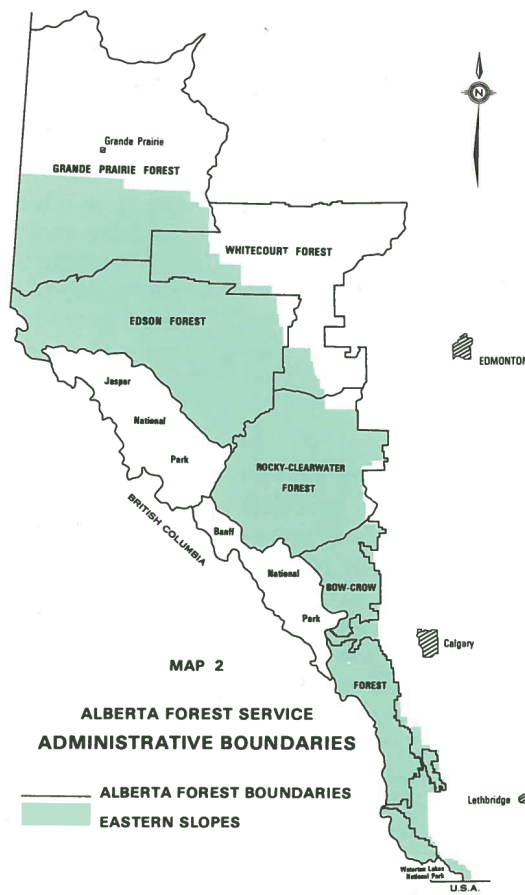
To ensure a healthy forest environment in this prime recreational area and provide a reasonable supply of timber on a sustained-yield basis to wood utilizing facilities and the general public. The high standard of harvest operations will ensure maintenance of aesthetic qualities and a quality environment for the prime use of recreation.

Northern Bow Portion (Ghost, Little Red Deer, Red Deer and Burnt Timber river areas)

To maintain a sustained-yield timber supply to wood utilizing facilities and for local public use. To increase the sustained-yield timber supply available to timber quota holders and/or forest management agreement holders and the general public through an expanded permanent forest land base consistent with optimal forest land allocation.

2. ROCKY/CLEARWATER, EDSON, WHITECOURT AND GRANDE PRAIRIE FORESTS

To maintain a sustained-yield timber supply to the wood utilizing facilities and for local public use. To increase the sustained-yield timber supply available to timber quota holders and/or forest management agreement holders and for local use consistent with optimal forest land use allocation.



Mineral Resources

1. COAL

To increase income and job benefits from the coal resources and to meet Alberta's growing demands for coal for energy and other industrial requirements. To encourage

the supply of coal and coal products to other parts of Canada and foreign countries after ensuring the long-term adequacy of supply for provincial needs.

2. OIL AND NATURAL GAS

To create income and job benefits from oil and natural gas resources throughout the region.

3. QUARRIABLE AND METALLIC MINERALS

To create income and job benefits from quarriable and metallic mineral resources.

4. AGGREGATE RESOURCES

To make aggregate resources in the region available to meet present and future needs.

Rangeland

1. To maintain rangelands in good condition through sound range management practices.

2. To restore rangelands on which forage productivity has declined from the encroachment of unproductive brush species.

3. To improve rangeland capability through more intensive range management.

Agriculture

1. To ensure the continued viability of existing livestock operations by sustaining 1977 levels of livestock numbers through the use of public lands.

2. To provide for the cultivation of lands that are suitable for production of annual and/or forage crops.

3. To expand domestic livestock grazing opportunities on public lands in that part of the region north of the Trans-Canada Highway.



A prime protection area (Mountains west of Hinton)

**REGIONAL
LAND USE ZONES**

The three broad areas of protection, management and development can be defined, on the land base of the region, as eight regional land use zones.

Broad Areas	Regional Zones
Protection	1. Prime Protection 2. Critical Wildlife
Resource Management	3. Special Use 4. General Recreation 5. Multiple Use 6. Agriculture
Development	7. Industrial 8. Facility

Regional zoning identifies units of land for which intents and objectives are specified. While regional zoning recognizes opportunities and allocates resources at a broad regional scale, it does not allocate land to specific projects within a zone. Through the recognition of zone intents, the process provides general guidance in locating specific project proposals within the region and often resolves land use conflicts.

Integrated resource planning at more detailed levels will provide further guidance for the future. It will also be the means used to develop more specific objectives and subsequent zones. Through integrated resource planning regional objectives and zoning will be confirmed and/or changed in order to ensure the appropriate delivery of benefits to Albertans.

Regulations under existing legislation ensure a high standard of resource protection, management and development control. Regional zoning does not replace or impinge upon these, but rather gives positive direction for future management of the Eastern Slopes.

The key to successful implementation of the regional plan will be co-operative, integrated decision-making. Regional zone names do not imply that a particular department or agency maintains jurisdiction over a given zone. All resources, wherever they are found, will be administered according to principles of integrated resource management.

The eight regional land use zones are discussed in the following text and displayed on the three map sheets in the pocket of the back cover. Activities considered to be generally consistent with the intent of each zone are summarized in the Table of Compatible Activities (page 15). The activities and uses listed are only a representative group of those which may be consistent with any given zone intent. For some activities or land uses such as transportation and utility corridors, commercial and industrial developments and residential development, it is not always possible to identify where and when they might be required. Exceptions may be made for these activities.

In all zones, watershed protection will be of paramount concern along with essential fish

and wildlife habitat. The Eastern Slopes also will provide different types of opportunities for scientific study within the intents of the zones.

1. Prime Protection Zone

The intent of the prime protection zone is to preserve environmentally sensitive terrain and valuable ecological and aesthetic resources.

It contains high-elevation forests and steep rocky slopes of the major mountain ranges in the Eastern Slopes. The lower boundary for this zone has been defined by elevation, ecological variables and aesthetic qualities. The boundary generally represents the lower extremities of the more sensitive terrain in the Eastern Slopes.

This zone is intended to protect the rugged mountain scenery for which the region is highly valued. It is the zone which receives the greatest amounts of precipitation and produces most of the streamflow of the Eastern Slopes. Many critical wildlife ranges, especially for bighorn sheep and mountain goats, are found within this zone.

Regional objectives which are considered compatible with the intent of this zone include those of watershed, fisheries and wildlife management, and extensive recreational activities such as hunting, trail use (non-motorized) and primitive camping. The objective for commercial fur harvesting will also be met to some degree. Future access or utility corridors may be required through this zone. Approved snowmobile trails may also cross this zone. Future commercial ski development may be considered in this zone, as it contains the only suitable snow and terrain conditions in the Eastern Slopes. In these cases, the ski lifts and associated facilities will be permitted in the prime protection zone, while accommodation and other services will be located in adjacent zones where such commercial development is appropriate.

Where considered essential and under strict operating guidelines, management programs may include activities such as wildlife habitat improvement, fire control, and timber sanitation cutting to protect merchantable timber in other zones.

2. Critical Wildlife Zone

The Eastern Slopes is a unique and important wildlife region due to the many combinations of climate, topography and vegetation which provide habitat for a wide variety of species.

The intent of the critical wildlife zone is to protect ranges or terrestrial and aquatic habitats that are crucial to the maintenance of specific fish and wildlife populations.

The zone consists of such areas as key winter range, migration routes and calving areas that are essential to the survival of specific wildlife species such as mountain goats, bighorn sheep, elk and caribou, and of spawning areas vital to maintaining naturally



Ensuring wintering area for wildlife (Bighorn sheep)

reproducing salmonid populations. The zoning recognizes only those habitat areas which are crucial to the life cycle of particular species due to vegetation, climate or topography. Regional objectives which are considered compatible with the intent of this zone include watershed, fisheries and wildlife management, serviced camping and extensive recreation activities such as hunting and fishing, trail use and primitive camping. Resource extraction objectives such as those of trapping, logging, domestic grazing, petroleum, natural gas, coal and mineral exploration and development may be achieved. Future roads or utility corridors may require access through this zone.

3. Special Use Zone

The intent of this zone is to recognize historic resources, lands set aside for scientific research and any lands which are required to meet unique management requirements, or legislative status, which cannot be accommodated within any of the other zones.

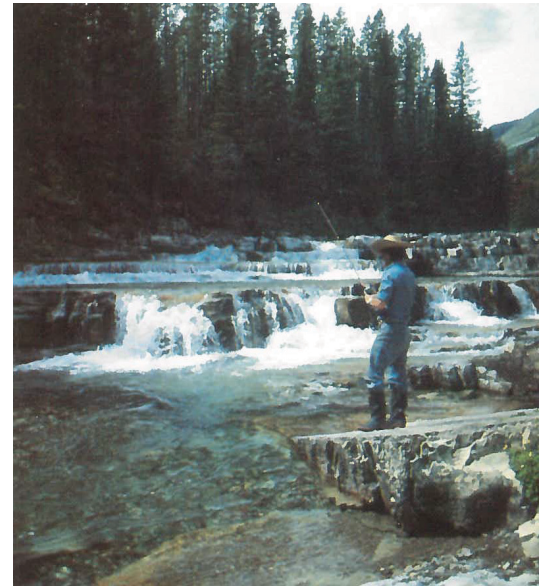
Examples include the Frank Slide and the abandoned mining community of Lille, the Marmot Creek Watershed Research Basin, the Cache Percotte Forest Reserve, the northern portion of Whaleback Ridge, Indian reserves and other federal Crown land.

Any regional objective may be achieved to a limited extent in special use zones which fall within provincial jurisdiction. Management guidelines will be defined according to the purpose and need on a site-specific basis.

4. General Recreation Zone

The intent of the general recreation zone is to retain a variety of natural environments within which a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities may be provided. Most of the areas of the general recreation zones are associated with river valley corridors or lakes.

Regional objectives which are considered compatible with the intent of this zone include those of watershed management, fishing, hunting, trail use (non-motorized), use of off-highway vehicles on designated trails, all types of camping, and day-use recreation. Resource extraction objectives such as those of trapping, logging, domestic grazing, petroleum and natural gas exploration and development, and coal and mineral exploration and development may be achieved to a limited degree. Future roads or utility corridors may require access through this zone. Commercial development which serves the general public may occur. Management emphasis will be on maintaining the natural environment for recreation purposes, an example being to maintain or improve vistas or improve stream habitat to increase sport fishing opportunities.



Important recreational resources (Water and fisheries)

5. Multiple Use Zone

The intent of the multiple use zone is to provide for the management and development of the full range of available resources, while meeting the objectives for watershed management and environmental protection in the long term.

This zone contains broad areas of forested lands and comprises approximately 65 percent of the Eastern Slopes, exclusive of the national parks. A variety of natural resources — water, timber, oil, gas, coal, scenic areas, forage, and fish and wildlife — is found in this zone. Much of the area is accessible and is experiencing growing pressures for private uses and resource development.

The multiple use zone produces an important portion of the water supply and associated fisheries from the Eastern Slopes by a dense network of stream courses. The zone contains coniferous and deciduous forests of varying age classes which have development potential and considerable economic value. A significant num-

ber of jobs and other benefits are provided by the forest industries in the region. These industries depend largely on this zone to provide a permanent land base for sustained production. The large area of forested land also provides the major habitats for wildlife. Those portions of the zone which are suitable are utilized for improved and unimproved summer grazing by domestic livestock.

The multiple use zone has been extensively explored and developed for petroleum and natural gas and contains a number of producing fields. Future energy needs will exert pressure for additional recovery of oil and gas reserves. Mineral and coal exploration and development continue at an increasing rate in this zone. Present and future recreation use of the zone will include all types of camping, trail use, hunting and fishing.

All regional objectives may be achieved to a greater or a lesser degree within the multiple use zone. As with all zones, decisions as to the primacy of use and allocation of land and resources will occur through the integrated resource planning or referral processes which operate within a framework of existing regulations.

Relatively small areas of land in the zone will be disturbed by resource development at any one time. Areas for off-highway vehicle use, such as snowmobiling, have been identified within this zone. Commercial and residential development may occur on a limited basis as required.

6. Agriculture Zone

The intent of the agriculture zone is to recognize those lands within the Eastern Slopes which are presently utilized or are considered suitable for cultivation and/or improved grazing.

Such lands are located along the eastern boundary of the region. Designation of lands to the zone was based on a combination of soil capability, existing land use patterns and land ownership. The zone includes a mixture of public leased lands and private lands. As the integrated resource planning proceeds, in-

creased agricultural opportunities in new areas could be identified.

Some regional objectives may be achieved to a greater or lesser degree in this zone. As intensive agriculture now occurs on private lands, other land and resource uses will generally be governed by the owner in conformity with local land use orders and bylaws under the Planning Act of Alberta. The Eastern Slopes Policy has no jurisdiction over privately owned lands.

7. Industrial Zone

The intent of the industrial zone is to recognize existing or approved industrial operations, such as coal mines, gas processing plants, cement plants and large permanent forest product mills.

The size of each zone is limited to that which will reasonably support the specific development. The zones are essentially single use as the intensity of development generally precludes other activities. However, users of these zones are encouraged to develop compatible facilities for public use.

Because infrastructure and transportation facilities are a requirement of most major developments they are frequently adjacent to transportation and utility corridors and existing settlements.

8. Facility Zone

The intent of the facility zone is to recognize existing or potential settlement and commercial development areas. The zone must be able to accommodate future growth and additional areas will be zoned as required.

Settlement areas are primarily confined to existing major corridors, hamlets, villages or towns. Commercial areas not within the corridors include the existing and potential recreation service centre developments and visitor accommodations. Resource objectives which may be consistent with the intent of this zone include those of logging, oil and gas development, and most types of outdoor recreation.



Tourism and water management (Abraham Lake)



Skiing at Fortress Mountain



Domestic grazing (Livingstone area)

IMPLEMENTATION: Integrated Resource Planning, and Policies and Guidelines

1. Integrated Resource Planning

The regional plan for the Eastern Slopes is a guide for the future at the broad regional scale and does not permanently zone the areas. It is an intermediate step between the Eastern Slopes Policy and the integrated resource plans that will provide more detailed and comprehensive land use allocations and guidance. Secondly, the regional plan through the Table of Compatible Activities also provides interim guidance for resources managers who must make daily decisions on land and resource uses until the more detailed integrated resource plans are completed.

Both the integrated resource plans and site-specific decisions made using the Table of Compatible Activities conform generally to the regional plan and the Eastern Slopes Policy. It is recognized, however, that additional and more detailed information may support decisions that would be contrary to the initial direction. Requests for changes or adjustments of zones may originate during the detailed integrated resource planning projects or on a site-specific decision. The requests may come from resource management agencies, other government departments, industry or the general public.

During the integrated resource planning process, resource objectives for each area are tested for compatibility with the intent of that area as defined in the regional plan. If compatible, the planning process will describe how the objectives are to be achieved through management guidelines. If not, the request should be forwarded to a higher level of

authority (ministerial) to test the requested decision with the intents of the Eastern Slopes Policy.

On a site-specific decision where there is not an integrated resource plan to provide direction, decisions are tested against the Table of Compatible Activities. If the Table indicates that the activity or land use is not permitted, a request for a zoning change can be made. This request is also tested against the intents of the regional plan and the Eastern Slopes Policy and can be accepted or rejected. The objectives and zoning for the regional plan will also be implemented through the following policies and guidelines.

As part of the implementation, detailed planning will identify designated vehicle access routes which may include routes in all zones.

2. Existing Land Use Commitments

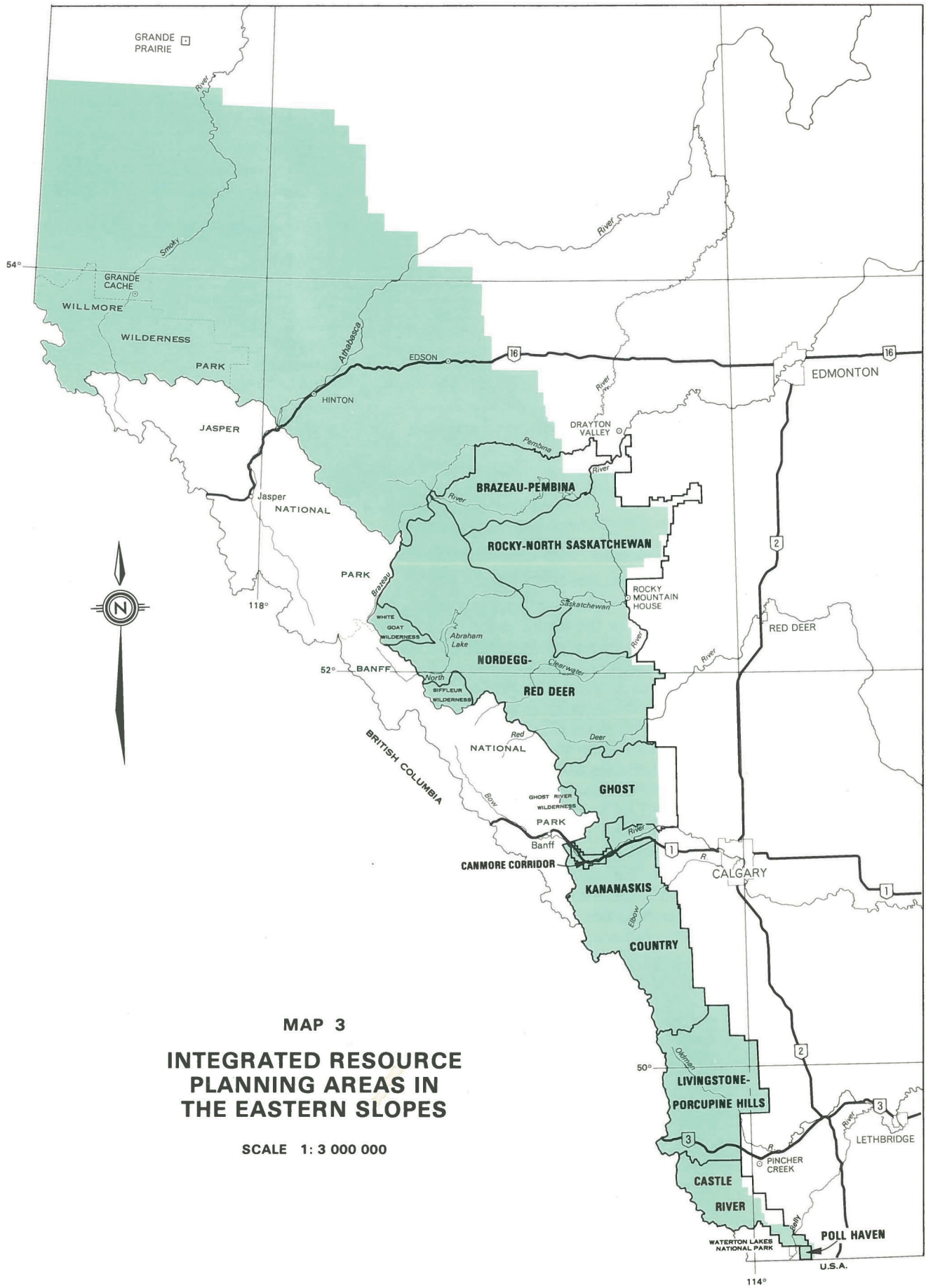
Existing land use activities and industrial operations will continue, subject to the regulatory systems now in effect.

3. Sale of Public Lands

Most of the public lands in the Eastern Slopes will be retained in public ownership for the use of all Albertans. The sale of parcels of public land for permanent and seasonal residential use may be considered. Parcels of public land may also be sold for site and capital-intensive development where site-specific conditions are met.

4. Service Centres

Service centre development will generally be directed to defined nodes associated with transportation corridors.




MAP 3
INTEGRATED RESOURCE
PLANNING AREAS IN
THE EASTERN SLOPES

SCALE 1:3 000 000

**TABLE OF COMPATIBLE ACTIVITIES
BY LAND USE ZONE**

ZONE ACTIVITY	1 PRIME PROTECTION	2 CRITICAL WILDLIFE	3 SPECIAL USE	4 GENERAL RECREATION	5 MULTIPLE USE	6 AGRICULTURE	7 INDUSTRIAL	8 FACILITY
Non-motorized recreation								
Fishing								
Hunting								
Scientific study								
Trapping								
Trails, non-motorized								
Transportation & utility corridors								
Primitive camping								
Intensive recreation								
Off-highway vehicle activity								
Logging								
Domestic grazing								
Petroleum and natural gas exploration & development								
Coal exploration & development								
Mineral exploration & development								
Serviced camping								
Commercial development								
Industrial development								
Residential subdivisions								
Cultivation								
	Refer to Addendum							

 Compatible Use — Uses that are considered to be compatible with the intent of a land use zone under normal guidelines and land use regulations.

 Permitted Use — Uses that may be compatible with the intent of a land use zone under certain circumstances and under special conditions and controls where necessary.

 Not Permitted Use — Uses that are not compatible with the intent or capabilities of a land use zone.

These activities are only representative of the range of activities that occur in the Eastern Slopes. For these and any other activities, the possibility of whether they should or should not take place in a particular area must always be measured against the fundamental management intentions for that zone. Since economic opportunities are not all known in advance, site-specific developments may be considered in any zone.

As integrated resource plans are completed and approved, this table and the regional zoning maps will no longer apply.

For information concerning the guidelines, regulations, conditions and procedures, contact the Planning Branch, Alberta Environment and Protected Areas at AEPPlanning@gov.ab.ca

5. Surface Developments

Dispositions for facility and ancillary uses will be by lease or sale in accordance with established policies under the Public Lands Act.

6. Recreational Townhouse Units

Private development of recreational townhouse units will be allowed on a controlled basis in appropriate zones. All necessary services, such as sewage, water, garbage disposal and fire protection, will normally be provided by the owner or the municipal authority. Permanent residency will not be permitted without the approval of the local development authorities.

7. Recreational Cottages

Cottage development for seasonal recreation use will be considered. Such sites will be developed and managed on a carefully controlled basis.

8. Improved Grazing

Various programs may be carried out in order to improve domestic grazing on rangeland including that within forested areas. Methods may include mechanical clearing of aspen and brush, chemical brush control, fertilization, fencing and the provision of dugouts.

9. Public Access to Public Lands

All public land in the province is available for public use unless specifically restricted by regulation or disposition.

Access to public lands that are held under Grazing Lease or Grazing Permit is presently restricted by common law. The government encourages the disposition holder and the general public to co-operate in the use of these lands where outdoor recreation activities are involved. Forest Grazing Licences, Head Tax Permits and Forest Reserve Grazing Permits do

not convey any interest in land and therefore, permission to gain access is not needed.

Except when vehicular access could cause damage to the road, holders of Licences of Occupation for roadways must allow non-commercial users access over such roads. Holders of Licences of Occupation for roadways can request the Minister to restrict vehicular access when conditions are such that vehicular traffic will damage the road.

Access to timber dispositions is available to the public as no interest in the land is conveyed with these types of dispositions.

10. Petroleum and Natural Gas Exploration and Development

"Step-out" drilling may be permitted in Zone 1 so that an oil and gas field can be (would be) developed to the point of recovering the reserves in place. Geophysical activity may be permitted in Zone 1 on a very limited scale and under stringent operating conditions where localized geophysical activity is required to determine a "step-out" location.

New petroleum and natural gas dispositions will also be considered in Zone 1 for lands for which drilling prior to July 1977 has identified the existence of petroleum or natural gas. Where this existence was not identified, dispositions in Zone 1 near zones where petroleum and natural gas exploration and development is a permitted use may be granted with restrictions of surface activity for all lands which fall within Zone 1. Such a restriction will be identified in an addendum to the sales notice.

Applications for mineral surface leases will continue to be handled using the referral system currently in place and applications may be approved in Zone 1 where adequate environmental protection can be ensured.

Conclusion

The policy continues to provide broad direction for resource protection, management and development. This direction has led to the regional plan and its major parts — resource objectives and regional zoning. The policy also provides the direction for more detailed planning and resource management, to provide the various benefits the Eastern Slopes has to offer Albertans.

The policy is not the final plan or end product in integrated resource planning for the Eastern Slopes. It is not a prescription of land use that is unreceptive to new information and changing conditions: rather than the document that constrains resource management, it is the

positive response leading to better resource management in this special region — the Eastern Slopes.

With a program in place for implementing the Eastern Slopes Policy through integrated resource planning, the monitoring of changing public needs and the incorporation of new information will serve to identify the need for future reviews of the policy. Determination of the timing and extent of future reviews will remain the responsibility of the Associate Minister of Public Lands and Wildlife.

Major or significant changes to the policy will continue to require approval by the provincial Cabinet.

Glossary

Camping	The following levels of camping can be provided by either the private or public sectors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Auto Access	A formally designated camping facility that is accessible to normal vehicles from designated highways or improved roads.
<input type="checkbox"/> Group	The same as auto access camping but designed and managed to meet the needs of recognized groups.
<input type="checkbox"/> Primitive	An undesignated camping area accessible only by non-motorized means.
<input type="checkbox"/> Random	An undesignated area used for camping that is accessible by any means.
<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	A formally designated camping facility that is accessible by off-highway vehicles, helicopters or by non-motorized means.
<input type="checkbox"/> Serviced	A major designated camping facility that is directly accessible by designated road or improved road and that provides significant services such as electricity and pressurized water systems.
Coal Exploration and Development	All activities and infrastructure development associated with the exploration, development and production of coal.
Commercial Development	All activities and infrastructure associated with the development of facilities for the use of the general public, including fixed-roof recreation accommodation such as hunting, fishing, skiing and backcountry lodges, hotels, motels, apartments, townhouses, cottages and commercial recreation activities involving facilities such as ski hills and golf courses, whether owned and/or operated by the private or public sector.
Cultivation	Agricultural practices associated with the regular tillage of land for the production of annual and/or forage crops.
Disposition	A lease, licence, permit or letter of authority issued under provincial legislation for activities either surface or sub-surface.
Domestic Grazing	All activities associated with the production and utilization of forage for domestic livestock.
Fishing	The removal of fish species under a licence for any purpose including commercial, recreational or domestic use and for management purposes.
Forage	All browse and non-woody plants that are available to livestock or game animals and used for grazing or harvested for feeding.
Goal	An end to be striven for but not necessarily achievable.
Hunting	The stalking of any wild animal for recreational and management purposes or as a source of food.
Industrial Development	All activities and infrastructure associated with the development of an industrial base to accommodate the extraction, removal and processing of resources.
Integrated Resource Management	A co-operative and comprehensive approach to the establishment of plans and to the delivery of benefits from the resource base in an efficient and effective manner.

Integrated Resource Planning	A co-operative and comprehensive approach to decision-making on resource uses.
Logging	All activities associated with the removal and transport of timber for manufacture into forest products.
Mineral Exploration and Development	All activities and infrastructure associated with the exploration, development and production of industrial minerals.
Objective	A clear and specific statement of planned results to be achieved.
Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Activity	Any activity using motorized transportation to traverse any area not designated as a highway or improved road.
Petroleum and Natural Gas Exploration and Development	All activities and infrastructure associated with the exploration, development and production of petroleum and natural gas resources.
Public Lands	Lands of the Crown in right of Alberta.
Rangeland	Lands used for grazing by domestic livestock and wildlife including natural grasslands, savannas, shrublands, alpine communities and wet meadows. The term has also come to include forest lands with an understorey or periodic cover of herbaceous or shrubby vegetation. Seeded lands which are managed under ecological principles rather than agronomic principles are properly termed range.
Recreation	The following levels of recreation can be provided by either the public or private sectors.
<input type="checkbox"/> Dispersed	Various kinds of recreation activities that generally occur throughout a large area and are not confined to a specific place. Activities that would be associated with dispersed recreation include hiking, remote or primitive camping, hunting, fishing, horseback riding and cross-country skiing.
<input type="checkbox"/> Extensive	Low-density, dispersed recreational use that does not require sustained recreation management to maintain the recreation opportunities.
<input type="checkbox"/> Intensive	High-density recreational use such as developed camp and picnic grounds, swimming beaches, ski hills, sky trams, golf courses and other sites or areas requiring continuous recreation management and services to maintain the recreation opportunities.
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Motorized	All recreational activities that do not involve or require the use of motorized equipment.
Residential Subdivisions	All activities and infrastructure associated with permanent-housing subdivisions for residents.
Resource	Any part of the natural environment which society perceives having value.
Resource Management	The planned and wise use of a particular natural resource to achieve a specific end.
Restricted Activity	Any activity which will not be permitted until such time as more strict than normal conditions are defined through integrated decision-making processes such as integrated resource planning and referrals.
Sanitation Cutting	The removal of dead, diseased, infested, damaged, or susceptible trees, essentially to prevent the spread of pests or pathogens and so promote forest hygiene.

Scientific Study	Short- or long-term research requiring a protected study area.
Step-out Well	A proposed well that, in the opinion of the Mineral Resources Division, Alberta Energy and Natural Resources (based on geophysical, geological or engineering technical data), has a reasonable chance of penetrating the same hydrocarbon-bearing structure discovered by a well drilled prior to July 1977.
Transportation and Utility Corridors	Linear land areas established to concentrate utilities and roads and to provide access for resource use and development.
Trapping	Sustained-yield harvest of fur-bearing animals for commercial production of merchantable fur and for management purposes.
Wildlife	Big game, gamebirds, birds of prey, fur-bearing animals, fur-bearing carnivores and any other species of vertebrates designated as wildlife by legislation.

Addendum

This Addendum incorporates section 3.13 Classification of Lands for Coal Exploration and Development from “A Coal Development Policy for Alberta” (1976) into the “A Policy for Resource Management of the Eastern Slopes, Revised 1984” to reflect the Coal Categories as presented in the May 2017 map titled “LAND CLASSIFICATION FOR COAL EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE EASTERN SLOPES OF ALBERTA JUNE 1976”.

3.13

Classification of Lands for Coal Exploration and Development

Having regard to the questions of environmental sensitivity, alternate land uses, potential coal resources and the extent of existing development of townsites and transportation facilities, the Government has classified Provincial lands into four categories with respect to coal exploration and development:

- Category 1** in which no exploration or commercial development will be permitted. This category includes National Parks^a, present or proposed Provincial Parks^b, Wilderness Areas^c, Natural Areas^d, Restricted Development Study Areas^e, Watershed Research Study Basins^f, Designated Recreation Areas^g, Designated Heritage Sites^h, Wildlife Sanctuariesⁱ, settled urban areas and major lakes and rivers. These are areas for which it has been determined that alternate land uses have a higher priority than coal activity. Category 1 also includes most areas associated with high environmental sensitivity; these are areas for which reclamation of disturbed lands cannot be assured with existing technology and in which the watershed must be protected.
- Category 2** in which limited exploration is desirable and may be permitted under strict control but in which commercial development by surface mining will not normally be considered at the present time. This category contains lands in the Rocky Mountains and Foothills for which the preferred land or resource use remains to be determined, or areas where infrastructure facilities are generally absent or considered inadequate to support major mining operations. In addition this category contains local areas of high environmental sensitivity in which neither exploration or development activities will be permitted. Underground mining or in-situ operations may be permitted in areas within this category where the surface effects of the operation are deemed to be environmentally acceptable.
- Category 3** in which exploration is desirable and may be permitted under appropriate control but in which development by surface or underground mining or in-situ operations will be approved subject to proper assurances respecting protection of the environment and reclamation of disturbed lands and as the provision of needed infrastructure is determined to be in the public interest. This category covers the Northern Forested Region and eastern portions of the Eastern Slopes Region show in Map 1 of Appendix 2. It also includes Class 1 and Class 2 agricultural lands^j in the settled regions of the Province. Although lands in this category are generally less sensitive from an environmental standpoint than the lands in Category 2, the Government will require appropriate assurances, with respect to surface mining operations on agricultural lands, that such lands will be reclaimed to a level of productivity equal to or greater than that which existed prior to mining.
- Category 4** in which exploration may be permitted under appropriate control and in which surface or underground mining or in-situ operations may be considered subject to proper assurances respecting protection of the environment and reclamation of disturbed lands. This category covers the parts of the Province not included in the other three categories.

a National Parks are those areas established under The National Parks Act.

b Provincial Parks are those areas established by Order in Council under The Provincial Parks Act. Also included is Willmore Wilderness Park which is established by The Willmore Wilderness Park Act.

c Wilderness Areas are those areas established under The Wilderness Areas Act.

d Natural Areas are those areas set aside for that purpose by Order in Council under either The Public Lands Act or The Provincial Parks Act.

e, f Restricted Development Study Areas and Watershed Research Study Areas are lands set aside by Alberta Energy and Natural Resources at the request of other departments and agencies for the purpose of conducting research or preparing detailed land use plans. Examples are the Cooking Lake Study, the Cache Percotte Forest Reserve and the Marmot Basin Watershed Study Area.

g Designated Recreation Areas include Alberta Forest Service Recreation Areas, Alberta Transportation Campgrounds, municipal and regional parks and intensive recreation facilities such as ski hills.

h Designated Heritage Sites are those lands designated as registered heritage sites, classified heritage sites and heritage monuments by Ministerial Order or Order in Council under The Alberta Heritage Act, 1973.

i Wildlife sanctuaries are those lands set aside as bird sanctuaries and game preserves by Order in Council under The Public Lands Act.

j As classified by the Canada Land Inventory soil capability for agriculture system.

Table 1 presents a summary of the classification system and the extent of exploration and development permitted in the four land categories. A further description of the Categories and two maps related to them are given in Appendix 2.

The Government emphasizes that the present classification, while based upon the best available knowledge, is subject to review in the light of changing knowledge and new technology related to environment protection, reclamation and mining methods. The Government will consider documented applications for reclassification of lands from any interested persons. Such applications should be addressed to the Minister of Energy with a copy to the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas.

It is also important to note the lands in Category 2, 3 or 4 are not automatically open to exploration nor are lands in Category 3 or 4 automatically open to exploration and development. Each application for rights to explore, for leases to Crown coal rights and for authorization for development will be considered on its own merits through the procedure outlined in Section 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. Particular care will be taken in the appraisal of applications for exploration or development in productive or potentially productive agricultural areas.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF CLASSIFICATION OF ALBERTA LANDS FOR PURPOSES OF COAL EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT

	CATEGORY 1 (Mountains & Other)	CATEGORY 2 (Mountains & Foothills)	CATEGORY 3 (Plains & Northern)	CATEGORY 4
CRITERIA	Includes areas for which: 1. Alternative land uses have been established not reconcilable with coal operations. 2. Environmental sensitivity is high.	Includes areas in the Foothills and Mountains for which: 1. The preferred land or resource use remains to be determined. 2. Environmental sensitivity is moderate, except for specific situations of high sensitivity. 3. Infrastructure facilities are generally absent.	Includes areas outside of the Foothills and Mountains for which: 1. Potential land use conflicts remain to be resolved, especially with respect to agricultural lands. 2. Environmental sensitivity is not critical, except for specific situations. 3. Infrastructure facilities are generally absent or only partly developed.	Includes all areas not placed in Categories 1, 2 and 2A
EXPLORATION	None	Limited exploration permitted under strict control.	Exploration permitted under normal approval procedures.	Exploration permitted under normal approval procedures.
DEVELOPMENT	None	Restricted development – underground or in-situ only.	Restricted development.	Development permitted under normal approval procedures.
EXISTING LEASES	1. Sell back to Government or 2. Continue to expiration of term.*	1. Sell back to Government or 2. Continue with option to renew.	1. Sell back to Government or 2. Continue with option to renew.	Continue with option to renew.
NEW DISPOSITIONS	None	1. Applications for leases accepted where exploration approved. 2. Leases issued where development approved.	1. Applications for leases accepted where exploration approved. 2. Leases issued where development approved.	Leases issued.

*but without option to renew except in certain leases originally granted by Canada.