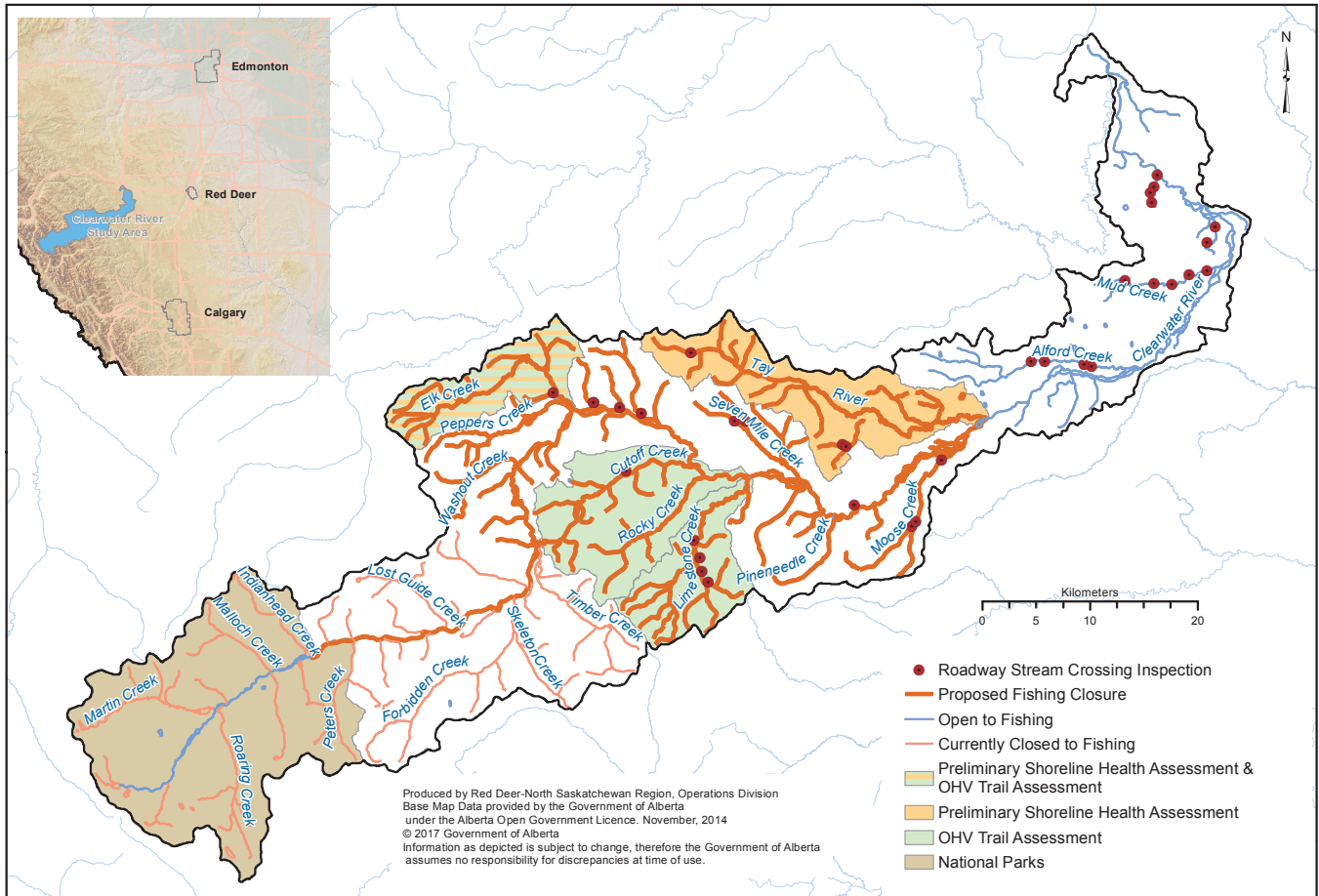


NORTH CENTRAL NATIVE TROUT RECOVERY PROGRAM



The **North Central Native Trout Recovery Program** is a long term initiative to recover native trout and whitefish in the central and northern East Slopes of Alberta. During the Program, management actions will be implemented in focal watersheds, with successful management actions applied in subsequent watersheds over time. The Program is part of an integrated provincial Fisheries Management approach, which means it is linked to the Provincial bull trout and Athabasca rainbow trout recovery planning processes, whirling disease and invasive species management, and the provincial Roadway Watercourse Crossings Remediation program.

CLEARWATER RIVER WATERSHED

The Clearwater River watershed extends from its headwaters in Banff National Park downstream to the confluence with the North Saskatchewan River, excluding Prairie Creek. Historically, native fish in the Clearwater River were abundant and distributed throughout the watershed. However, using information collected from standardized surveys, bull trout and mountain whitefish populations are currently considered at moderate risk of local extirpation. Based on the best available science, these species are currently limited by four key threats: mortality from fishing (catch & release and harvest), poaching, habitat fragmentation (barriers that prevent fish movement), and reduced water quality (due to higher sediment loads).

Fisheries Management Objective

The fisheries management objective for the Clearwater River watershed is to establish and maintain a sustainable fishery for bull trout and mountain whitefish. To achieve this objective, the Government of Alberta will recover fish populations by implementing management actions that address the 4 key threats identified above.

Management Actions

- 1. Address fishing mortality:** A fishing closure is proposed for the Clearwater River watershed on the river and tributaries from Banff National Park boundary downstream, including the Tay River (see map above). Sections of the watershed that are currently closed will remain closed to angling.
- 2. Address poaching:** Fisheries Management is working with enforcement agencies to ensure fishing closures are effective.
- 3. Address habitat fragmentation:** Habitat related management actions may include remediating fish movement barriers, such as hanging culverts.
- 4. Address water quality:** Mitigation of point sources of sediment and phosphorous runoff, which may include areas of OHV disturbance and impacted shorelines. Specific actions depend on the results of fish habitat assessments in 2017 and 2018. Fisheries Management will work with key stakeholders and regulators to implement management actions.



Mature bull trout



Hanging culvert that stops fish from moving into upstream habitat

Next Steps–2017/2018

Fish Population Assessment: Standardized electrofishing surveys will be conducted to assess current fish abundance and distribution. This information will allow Fisheries Biologists to evaluate the success of management actions and track population recovery.

Water Temperature Assessment: Water temperature will be assessed throughout the watershed to identify areas that provide thermally suitable habitat for bull trout. In other words, providing information on where bull trout should reside if there were no other limiting factors.

Preliminary Shoreline Health Assessments: Aerial reconnaissance of Elk Creek and Tay River to identify zones of erosion and disturbance.

OHV Trail Assessments: Assessment of Limestone Creek, Rocky Creek, Cutoff Creek and Elk Creek to identify areas with high OHV disturbance.

Roadway Stream Crossing Inspections: Standardized inspections of culverts and bridges to locate barriers to fish movement and sedimentation concerns due to erosion.

Fisheries Management Public Survey: We want to hear from you! An online public survey will be posted to invite Albertans to comment on the proposed temporary fishing closure.



OHV disturbance on a tributary to the Clearwater River

WEBSITE INFORMATION

Mywildalberta.ca

<http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/default.aspx>