



Special Places:

Alberta's Parkland 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 Parkland Natural Region.

The Parkland Natural Region forms a broad transition between the grasslands to the south and forests to the north. It is present only in Canada's prairie provinces. There are three subregions in the Parkland Natural Region. Each is separated on the basis of geographic location and vegetation differences.

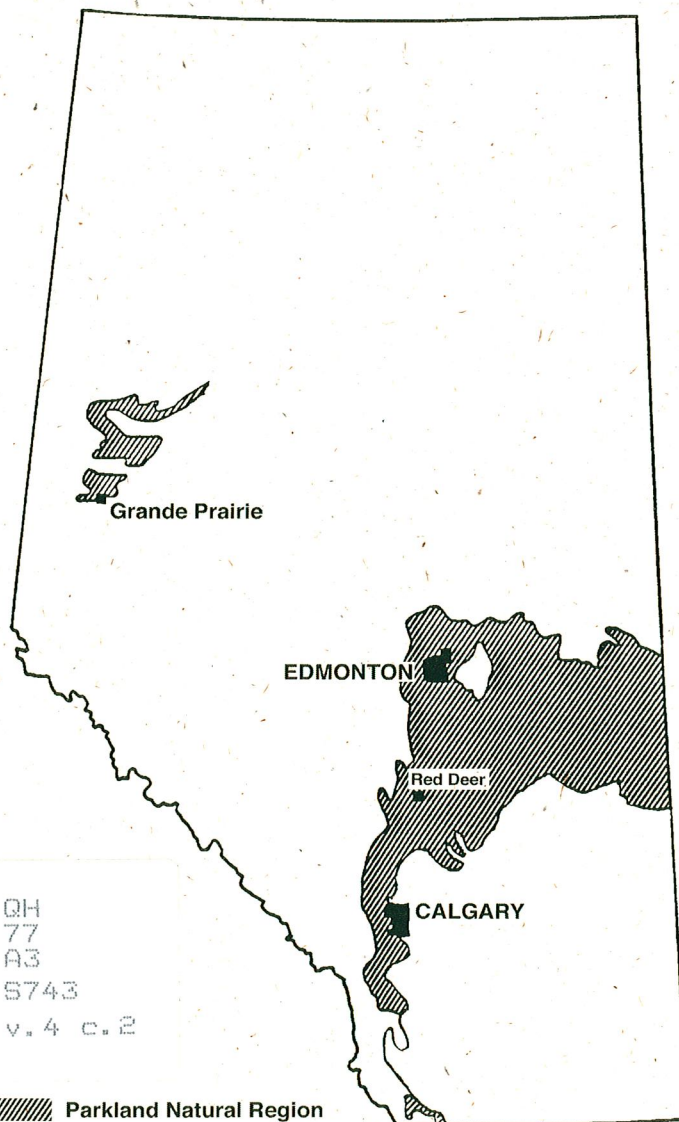
The Central Parkland Subregion and Peace River Parkland Subregion have been extensively cultivated and relatively small areas remain in native cover. The Foothills Parkland Subregion occupies a narrow band along the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountain foothills from Calgary south to the Porcupine Hills and from Pincher Creek to the U.S. Border.

Parkland Subregions

Central Parkland

Foothills Parkland

Peace River Parkland



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/// Parkland Natural Region



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

The Parkland Natural Region contains three subregions: Foothills Parkland, Peace River Parkland and Central Parkland. All three are under-represented in the existing protected areas network.

The Foothills Parkland Subregion currently contains few protected areas outside Waterton Lakes National Park and a number of Natural Areas. The Peace River Parkland Subregion's natural diversity also has little representation in existing protected areas. The Central Parkland Subregion contains several small protected areas, however many important landscapes (e.g. Glacial Lake Bed, Ground Moraine and Sandy Plain) are not adequately represented in the existing network of protected areas.

How much land needs to be designated to fill these gaps in the Parkland 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. From this information, it is possible to set preservation targets for each type of landform in each subregion. In the Parkland Natural Region, the gap based on Level 1 themes is 1605 square km.

Will small portions of land in the Parkland 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 Parkland Natural Region?

As of September 1996, 20 nominations have been received. Of the 20 nominations, seven are private land nominations that will not be accepted.

What is the timeframe for Special Places in the Parkland 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 Parkland Natural Region was September 20, 1996. It is estimated that nominations in the Parkland Natural Region will be reviewed by the PCC in mid-1997.

How Nominations Will Proceed in the Parkland Natural Region

The Special Places Process

Is there a prescreening process in the Parkland Natural Region and, if so, who is involved?

The prescreening process identifies candidate sites — sites with high probability of meeting the preservation goal. Environmentally Significant Areas studies, nominations and relevant natural heritage information are used to take a first cut at identifying candidate sites. The second step includes further review, examining existing resource and landuse commitments. If a site is modified as a result of this second step, the modified site is re-analyzed to ensure it continues to meet the preservation goal.

The prescreening process is completed by an Interdepartmental Director's Committee, and reviewed by the Provincial Coordinating Committee (PCC). Interim protection measures may be applied to candidate sites at this stage to ensure the integrity of the sites are not compromised during the review process.

What is value-added information, and when is it complete?

Once candidate sites are identified, a government Interdepartmental Committee is asked to provide value-added information on each site within 45 days. The Provincial Coordinating Committee considers this value-added information in preparing recommendations to the Minister of Environmental Protection regarding the establishment of Local Committees.

After the prescreening, what is the review process for nominations?

Following a detailed review of nominations, the PCC recommends for further consideration candidate sites which best meet Special Places objectives.

Local Committees (LCs) will then be established. Municipal governments in the Parkland Natural Region will be offered the opportunity to host and chair LCs 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.

How does the Special Places process handle the rights of tenure holders on nominated Crown land?

The Special Places policy states the government will honour commitments to tenure holders. Local Committees will ensure the review process represents tenure holders rights and interests.

For More Information . . .

Several sources of information about Special Places are available. 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 Parkland Natural Region, contact:

Sue Arrison (Red Deer) at (403) 340-5310
Ron Davis (Peace River) at (403) 624-6402

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

