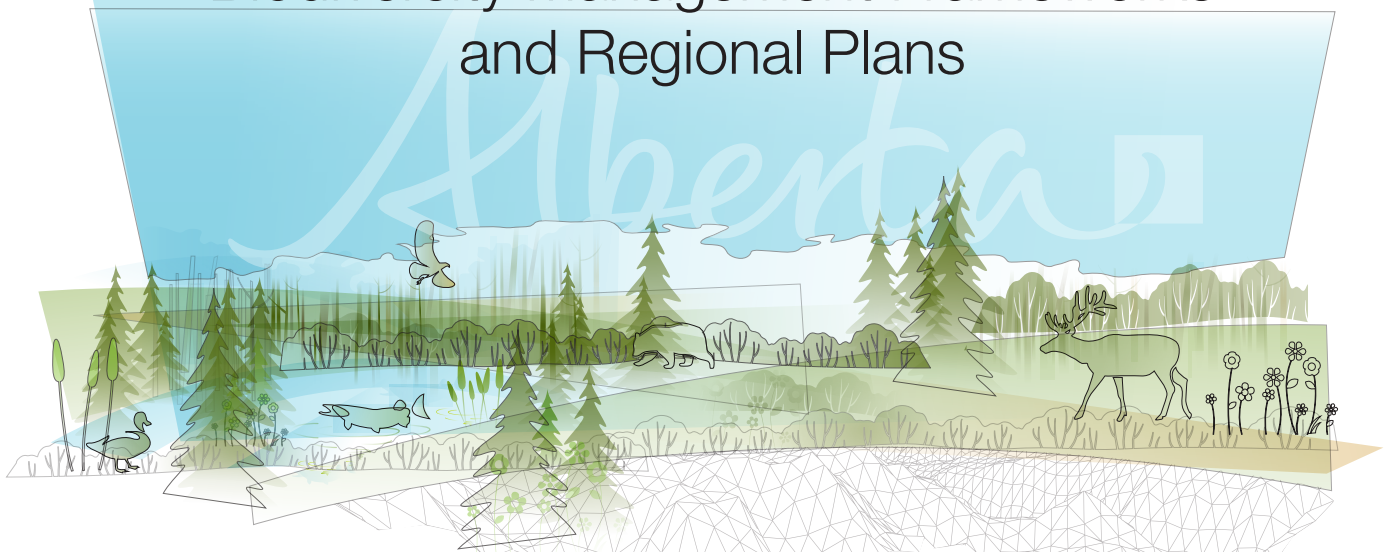


# Biodiversity Management Frameworks and Regional Plans



Biodiversity and the services it provides are critical to the well-being of current and future generations of Albertans. Benefits from healthy functioning ecosystems and the biodiversity contained within include the following:

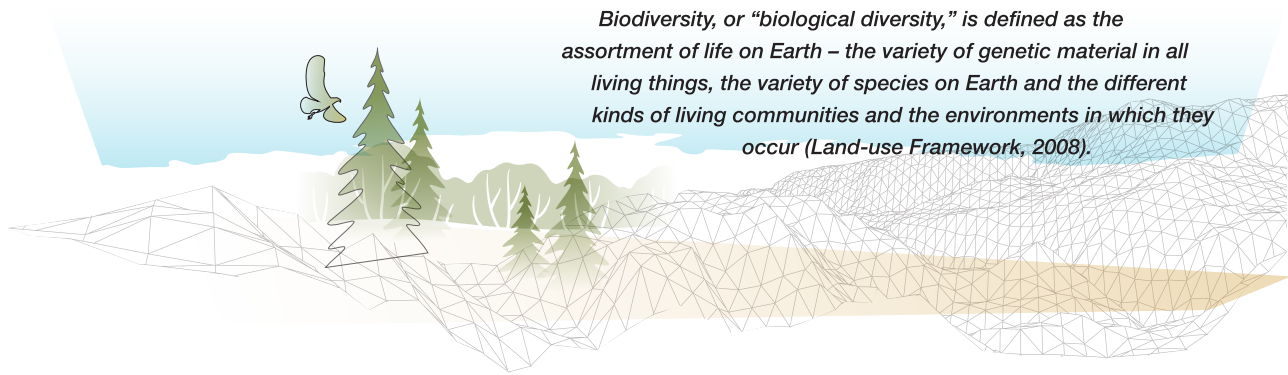
- food, fibre, fresh water
- spiritual, recreational, esthetic, cultural benefits
- flood control, water and air purification nutrient cycling, soil formation

## What will the biodiversity management framework (BMF) be?

The Lower Athabasca Regional Plan and the draft South Saskatchewan Regional Plan commit the government to complete a biodiversity management framework for each region. BMFs are a cumulative effects management approach designed to address the need for biodiversity monitoring and management. The management frameworks will support the conservation and management of biodiversity affected by land-use activity in a region. It is not intended to address all aspects of biodiversity. It will be developed and implemented to add to and complement, not replace or duplicate, existing policies, legislation, regulations and management tools. Its primary features are regional objectives, key indicators, a monitoring approach, and identification of management actions to support meeting those objectives.

### KEY PRINCIPLES

- Applies a regional perspective
- Outcomes-focused
- Collaborative implementation
- Science-based and transparent monitoring system
- Builds on and complements existing policies, legislation, and regulations
- Adaptive and responsive to monitoring information.



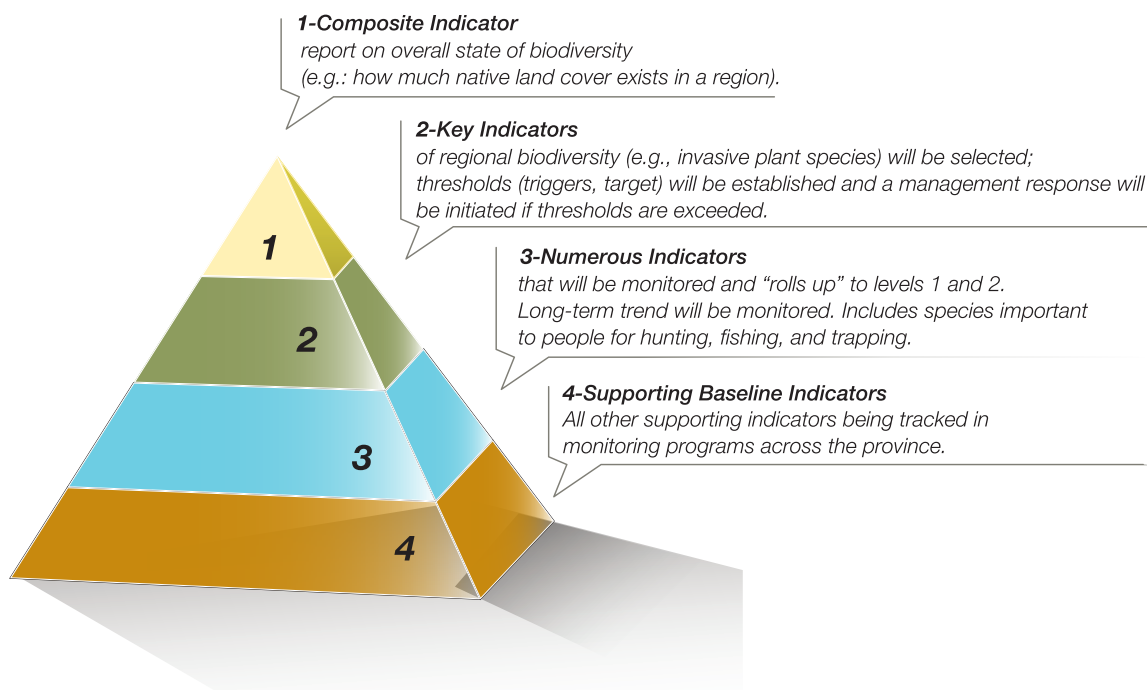
## How will the BMF work?

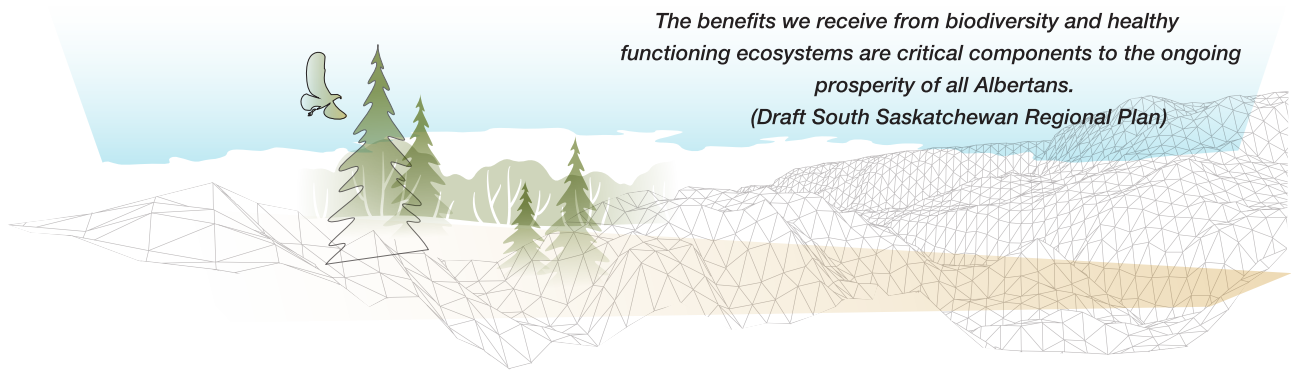
The BMF will identify key indicators of biodiversity. It will focus on indicators that represent the broad range of biodiversity in the region including key species, important habitats and landscapes important to sustaining long-term ecosystem health. Indicators will be closely linked to the biodiversity outcomes and objectives identified in the regional plans. The indicators are organized into four pyramids, representing the health of terrestrial and aquatic species populations and terrestrial and aquatic habitat health. The framework will identify 12 key indicators of biodiversity. Each level of the pyramid represents different types of indicators or data. The levels are outlined below.

### CRITERIA FOR INDICATOR SELECTION

- Relevant to plan objectives—support management decisions or need management attention
- Representative of regional scale biodiversity—both terrestrial (land) and aquatic
- Ecologically relevant – reflect biodiversity interactions and ecosystem functions in the region at multiple scales
- Responsive to land-use—provide ‘early warning’ signals
- Feasible to measure and monitor—cost-effective

### INDICATORS WITH SPECIFIC OUTCOMES





## Monitoring and modelling

Monitoring involves collecting information on the status of biodiversity indicators and the amount of human disturbance footprint. Biodiversity monitoring for the framework will be conducted by the Alberta Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Agency (aemera.org). Monitoring will be linked to other biodiversity monitoring initiatives led by the government or partners of government. Data also comes from existing monitoring undertaken by Environment and Sustainable Resource Development and other organizations. By focusing on management actions for key selected indicators, it is expected that other biodiversity indicators will benefit. Long-term monitoring will be essential to make sure this assumption is valid.

Management Plan for the Lower Athabasca Region, and Linear Footprint Planning in other regions. These planning initiatives will promote footprint minimization strategies such as coordinated road planning between industries to limit the extent and duration of industrial footprint and other Integrated Land Management (ILM) practices.

## Next steps and engagement

Engagement activities to support the development of the BMF will commence in the summer of 2014. Formal engagement sessions with targeted stakeholders will be held this summer and fall.

## Evaluate, report and respond

The level 2 indicators selected will be measured against triggers that are established at a regional scale. Monitoring results will present both a general view of biodiversity in the region and specific information for key indicators of interest, and how they are performing in relation to established triggers. Triggers will provide the signal for management responses that may be needed.

The management of biodiversity within a region will include a range of approaches and tools. The conservation areas established under regional plans will contribute to achieving biodiversity objectives. Managing public lands outside of conservation areas using various management approaches will also contribute towards achieving those objectives. A primary tool to support the objectives of the BMF will be the Landscape

### CURRENT TARGET DATES FOR ENGAGEMENT

- August 2014 for the Lower Athabasca Region
- September 2014 for the South Saskatchewan Region

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