

Phase 2 Stakeholder Consultation Summary

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan



SOUTH



Overview

Alberta's Land-use Framework (LUF) sets out a new approach to managing our province's lands and natural resources to achieve Alberta's long-term economic, environmental and social goals. One of the key strategies for improving land-use decision-making established in the LUF is the development of seven regional plans based on seven new land-use regions. Each regional plan will address the current conditions in a region, and will anticipate and plan for relevant development-related activities, opportunities and challenges over the long term.

In 2008, the Government of Alberta announced the LUF and said it would proceed first with the Lower Athabasca and South Saskatchewan regional plans. The government approved the LARP – the regional plan for Alberta's oil sands region in the northeast area of the province – in August of 2012. The plan was effective on September 1 and implementation is underway. Development of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan continues (SSRP regional boundaries).

Regional plans are developed in consultation with Albertans, a wide variety of stakeholders, aboriginal people and municipalities. Regional advisory councils, comprised of individuals with a cross-section of expertise and experience, are appointed to provide advice to the government for the development of the regional plan. The South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council, established in May of 2009, was asked to explore through an approved terms of reference the relationship between water, population growth, economic development and land conservation. The council provided its advice to the government in 2011.

The Alberta government's Land Use Secretariat (LUS) oversees the development of each regional plan and is responsible for reporting and monitoring the success of the plans. LUS provides policy analysis, research and administrative support to the regional plan development process and leads the Government of Alberta's regional plans consultations. The secretariat works with a larger regional planning team, representing Alberta government ministries and agencies, to develop regional plans for Cabinet approval. (Sentence or two about ALSA or leave out?)

The government consulted on the advice provided by the South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council in late 2012 gathering input through an online workbook and a series of public and stakeholder community conversations held in 20 cities, towns and farming communities throughout the region, in the adjoining Red Deer Region and in Edmonton.



Consultations

The South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP) will be developed with the input and feedback of Albertans through a three-phase consultation process:

Phase 1: input on the issues in the region

Phase 2: feedback on the advice from the SSRP

Phase 3: feedback on the draft SSRP.

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan Phase 1 consultation public and stakeholder input sessions were conducted in 16 locations across the region between November 30 and December 10, 2009. The purpose of the input sessions was to:

- Provide the public and stakeholders with information about the South Saskatchewan regional planning process; and
- Gather input on topics in the SSRP terms of reference.

In March 2011, the SSRP Regional Advisory Council (RAC) advice and Phase 2 workbook were released. In addition to completed workbooks, written submissions were accepted up to December 21, 2012.

SSRP Phase 2 consultations were carried out between November 6 and December 6, 2012 and had two key objectives:

- Review the Regional Advisory Council's (RAC) advice with representatives of key stakeholder groups throughout 17 communities in the region and in Edmonton, Red Deer and Drumheller to ensure all groups had the opportunity to take part within convenient proximity to a session(s);
- Seek input and feedback on RAC's advice according to the following questions for the five key topic areas:
 1. Vision/Strategic Land-use Principles;
 2. Healthy Economy;
 3. Healthy Ecosystems and Environment;
 4. Healthy Communities; and
 5. Land-use Direction/Management Intent.



Consultation Methodology and Locations

Stakeholder sessions were conducted in each location, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. To open the stakeholder sessions, a Land Use Secretariat representative provided participants with an overview of the SSRP planning process followed by a question and answer period. Next, the consultant's senior facilitator led a group discussion. A 10-minute overview of each of the key sections of the RAC's advice preceded a 30-minute discussion period in small groups on all of the topic areas using the following guiding questions:

- Where do you support RAC's advice and why?
- Where do you have concerns and why?
- What is missing?

Government employees were in attendance at all sessions and former members of the SSRP RAC dropped in to several sessions in an unofficial capacity.

Information and input sessions described as 'Community Conversations' for the general public were held between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. in the same location as each stakeholder session. In each community venue, the government set up a series of panels providing background and information about the LUF, the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* (ALSA) and a high-level summary of RAC's advice. A separate report entitled Phase 2 Public Consultation Summary – South Saskatchewan Regional Plan is available from the LUS in hard copy and on the website.

As well, all Albertans were encouraged to review the RAC advice and provide their feedback by completing either the online or hard-copy versions of a workbook called Phase 2 – Working Towards the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan, A Workbook to Share Your Views on the Regional Advisory Council's Advice to the Government of Alberta for the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan. In total, 1,302 completed workbooks were received in the two formats, the majority of which were submitted electronically. A separate report entitled Phase 2 Workbook Summary -South Saskatchewan Regional Plan is available from the LUS in hard copy and on the web site.

A total of 638 stakeholders participated in the 20 workshops. Turnout was particularly high in Lethbridge (80), Calgary (65) and Pincher Creek (54). A broad range of stakeholders participated in the sessions, including municipal, industry, environmental organizations, non-government organizations, irrigation districts, agricultural organizations, economic development authorities and landowners.



The dates and corresponding communities for the 20 sessions were as follows:

Date	Session Location(s)	
Tuesday, November 6	Cardston	Red Deer
Wednesday, November 7	Taber	
Thursday, November 8	Vulcan	
Tuesday, November 13	Calgary	
Thursday, November 15	Edmonton	
Tuesday, November 20	Airdrie	Pincher Creek
Wednesday, November 21	Canmore	Milk River
Thursday, November 22	Cochrane	Brooks
Tuesday, November 27	Claresholm	
Wednesday, November 28	Okotoks	
Thursday, November 29	Strathmore	
Tuesday, December 4	Drumheller	Crowsnest Pass
Wednesday, December 5	Medicine Hat	Foremost
Thursday, December 6	Lethbridge	

A number of stakeholder groups requested additional meetings during a session day including:

Municipal officials session	Calgary	November 13
Canadian Assoc. of Petroleum Producers session	Calgary	November 13
Environmental Non-Government Organizations	Canmore	November 21
Municipal Officials Session	Cochrane	November 22
Calgary Regional Partnership Session	Cochrane	November 22
Oldman River Regional Services Commission Session	Lethbridge	December 6



In addition, 75 submissions were received from the following 56 stakeholder groups with several groups submitting multiple times.

Agriculture Canada
Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta
Alberta Fish and Game Association
Alberta Milk
Alberta Beef Producers
Alberta Motor Sports Association
Alberta Sand and Gravel Association
Alberta Off Highway Vehicle Association
Alberta Wilderness Association
Alberta Land Trust Alliance
Alberta Irrigation Projects Association
Benign Energy
Bragg Creek and Kananaskis Outdoor Recreation
Bow River Irrigation District
Bow Valley Naturalists
Canadian Association of Petroleum Landmen
Calgary Regional Partnership
Canadian Badlands Ltd.
Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers
Canadian Natural Resources Ltd
Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition
Castle Mountain Resort Ltd.
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
Calgary Regional Airshed Zone
Cenovus
City of Calgary
City of Lethbridge
City of Red Deer
Economic Alliance of Southeast Alberta
Encana
Egg Farmer's of Alberta
Environmental Law Centre
Yellowstone to Yukon Initiative
Friends of Sandstone/Wilson
Coulees and Wetlands Assoc.
Ghost Alliance Watershed Society
Irrigation Secretariat



Lethbridge Coulee Kruzers
Livingstone Landowners Guild
Municipal District of Bighorn #8
National Trail Association of Canada
Oldman River Regional Services Commission
Oldman Watershed Council
Penn West Exploration
Population Institute of Canada
Rocky Mountain Dirt Riders Association
Rocky View County
St. Mary River Irrigation District
Shell Canada Energy
Southern Alberta Group for the Environment
Small Explorers and Producers Association of Alberta
Stoney Bar Grazing Company Ltd.
Taber Irrigation District
Town of Okotoks
Water Matters
Western Irrigation District
Western Stock Growers' Association

This report provides an overview of the key themes advanced during the stakeholder sessions, additional stakeholder meetings and written submissions. The report is organized by RAC advice topic areas as follows:

1. Vision and Strategic Land-Use Principles
2. Healthy Economy
3. Healthy Ecosystems and Environment
4. Healthy Communities
5. Land-Use Direction and Management Intent.

Additional comments beyond the scope of the workshop were also recorded and are included in this summary.



Vision and Strategic Land-Use Principles

The RAC proposed the following vision statement and land use principles for the South Saskatchewan Region. It describes a desired future in 50 years.

Southern Alberta is a diverse, healthy, vibrant and prosperous region where the natural beauty of the mountains, foothills, farmlands and the subtle beauty of the prairies are managed and celebrated so that future generations remain connected to the land and its history. The region prizes its natural and economic capital, and uses an integrated approach to effectively manage social, economic and environmental interaction. The principles of personal freedom, responsibility and property rights are respected, while the quality and ecological integrity of the landscape is sustained through the use of traditional aboriginal and community knowledge, sound science, innovative thinking and accommodation of rights and interests of all Albertans.

Plan for water

It is essential to determine the feasibility of all water conservation, supply and storage options. Because the supply and quality of water is so important, demand is likely to increase, and supply may be challenged in the region under any scenario. Headwater and source water protection and the need to manage land use to sustain water production and water quality are critically important.

Respecting private land ownership

The Government of Alberta must be guided by the principle of respecting private property rights. To acknowledge this, regional planning identifies common outcomes for private and public lands and offers implementation tools for both.

Developing conservation and stewardship tools

Conservation and stewardship tools are critical to the success of future land-use planning in the region. It is imperative that the Government of Alberta develop an enhanced suite of conservation and stewardship tools (e.g., economic and market-based incentives, conservation easements, transferable development credits, mitigation banking, etc.). New tools, when developed, must be easily accessible, well understood and applicable.

Accommodating multiple users

The South Saskatchewan Region has a history of multiple users sharing the landscape. The focus for planning should not be primarily on “if” but on “how” and under “what” conditions an activity can be allowed on the land base. Conservation and sustainable development can co-exist, and land-use planning needs to be based on triple bottom line⁶ principles and the use of market-based conservation tools.



Integrated planning

Land-use planning needs to progress to outcomes based on integrated local and regional planning that uses triple bottom line principles, incorporates multiple objectives, multiple stakeholders and involves market-based conservation and stewardship tools. Consideration should be given to reducing planning overlaps and redundancies while respecting the rights of affected jurisdictions in a collaborative approach to land-use decisions.

Regulatory streamlining and efficiency

The SSRP should lead other government initiatives to promote regulatory streamlining, harmonization and reduce levels of bureaucracy. Policies need to be integrated between departments and ministries. Regulations should be made more efficient by providing clear policy direction on key issues. Clear policy is also necessary for empowering local and provincial decision-making to achieve sustainable development outcomes.

First Nations' issues

First Nations' land-use issues need to be dealt with in a clear, provincial government-led process.

Economic opportunity

The success of the region will be dependent on the economic opportunities available in the region. This plan would provide more certainty and clarity regarding constraints to development.

Support for RAC's advice and why?

What follows is a representative sampling of comments from the stakeholder sessions:

- The vision statement has a good balance between economic and environmental principles
- Support for the inclusion of property rights in the vision statement
- Support for enhancing Alberta's regulatory process
- Vision statement is impressive and ambitious
- Vision captures the overall framework well
- It is excellent so far for the magnitude of the planning
- The vision and principles are positive and high level
- Conservation and stewardship tools are a good idea as long as they remain
 - voluntary
 - include market incentives
 - and are flexible



- Vision and principles reflect complexity of the region
- Regulatory streamlining is a good concept but staff working on the regulatory process should not lose the ability to have good oversight on environmental issues
- It will be difficult to achieve visions and principles given tough decisions that need to be made
- Water restrictions and conservation areas should override all other principles
- Vision statement is very long and could be shorter
- Appreciate the reference to respect for property rights
- Some streamlining had amalgamated some approval processes
- Landowners already demonstrate good stewardship

What are the concerns and why?

- The vision statement is too broad, too vague and too much of a motherhood statement to be effective
- It should be shorter and more succinct
- Skepticism about the balance between economy and conservation
- New conservation tools must be developed and implemented early
- Stakeholder should be involved in developing those tools
- Existing conservation tools should not be ignored – government does not need to recreate the wheel
- Identify tools in the regional plan including: special areas; species at risk and environmental impact assessments
- Calgary should not be included in this regional plan because its needs and requirements are too different from those in rural southern Alberta
- The issues and needs of large urban centres, like Calgary, could dwarf all other concerns
- Will Cabinet decide how land is used in the region, even though most members of cabinet do not understand issues that drive the region?
- Regional planning will lead to more government regulations that those in the region do not want
- People in the region do not want government to dictate how things are done in their region
- The vision is too focused on growth and there should be limits
- There should less emphasis on the economy



You told us:

Vision statement has a good balance between economic and environmental principles



- The timeline is too aggressive
- Rules and enforcement of the rules on public lands are essential
- There is a need to establish who among multiple users has priority
- Three main areas of concern:
 - property rights
 - access to water
 - regulatory streamlining.
- Property rights should include development of land in all aspects and fair compensation
- The energy industry is gaining influence at the expense of landowners
- Property rights are about more than ownership – leased land and water rights are also important
- A balance needs to be found when discussing property rights within land-use principles
- Stakeholder groups are concerned that if the regulatory process is streamlined it will favour industry rather than landowners
- Participants indicated that regulations are in place for a reason
- Bill 2 is eroding landowners rights
- There is inherent conflict in protecting property rights vs. development
- Planning can alleviate problems from occurring, that is, ranchers are tempted to sell land as values go up
- Private land focus is unacceptable for water protection
- Access to water is critical to the future of the region
- Water quality is of particular concern
- Calgary has been allocated more water than it can use, but conservation is being pushed in agricultural areas rather than cities
- The urban perspective – urban centres and urban sprawl – needs to be addressed
- Five or six recommendations – not 148 – would be a more appropriate number for the regional plan
- Fifty years is too far a horizon for the regional plan
- The vision is generic and could apply to any regional plan
- The vision includes subjective terms depending on perspective and politics
- Oil and gas development could override the agricultural sector



- Everyone needs to be on the same page
- Can all the diverse municipalities agree to the plan
- How will GOA departments work together
- Doubt the regional plan can live up to the statements in the vision given the amount of private land in the area
- There are not enough enforcement resources for what's already in place
- Will there be guaranteed money for the enforcement of new rules
- The vision statement suggests that the land has been previously mismanaged – simply not true
- It is awkward to refer to property rights in the vision statement
- There seems to be no recourse for people's property rights issues
- Vision statement should better define what is meant by "respecting property rights"
- LARP should not be used as a framework for SSRP - two different regions

What is Missing

- Vision statement lacks teeth, is too general
- It should provide a better definition of the prairies
- Property rights need to be embedded in the vision statement
- With the high level of private land ownership in the area, there is a need to clarify surface and sub-surface rights, establish economic tools for private land stewardship and strengthen ownership rights
- Tools and incentives are needed to better manage land
- Respecting private property rights needs to be expanded as a principle
- Consensus should be added to the vision
- The idea of the "greater public good" needs to be clarified
- More accommodation for all users is needed
- More innovation in use of economic tools and environmental goods and services tools is needed when building plans
- There are as many supporters of multiple-use as there are those who support single-use on the landscape
- Less emphasis on economy and more on water, environment, and climate change
- More teeth for enforcement is needed
- The government must commit to management and enforcement
- The vision and principles do not anticipate potential for new land uses that may be coming in 50 years



You told us:

*Access to water
is critical to the
future of the
region*



- More recognition of the sub-regional differences is required
- Missing elements from the land-use principles
- Cumulative impacts should be addressed in the strategic land-use principles
- Biodiversity and environmental protection should be guiding principles
- A clear statement on how resources will be managed is missing from the vision
- How to reconcile the principles articulated in the vision
- Economic development should not be last on the list
- Clarify what is meant by access management and recreation in the principles
- We must protect and conserve water sources, especially headwaters
- Water should be the first priority to protect headwaters and deal with drainage and water allocations
- Water is missing from the vision statement
- There is a need to better understand our watershed's capacity and develop better land stewardship so not to diminish that capacity
- Groundwater supply is integral to surface water and should be stressed and studied
- The municipal voice must be heard above all others as it brings local issues
- Incentives to municipalities to encourage land stewardship are needed
- Increase emphasis on protection and conservation of agricultural land
- Develop urban and rural areas plans together
- Greater emphasis about growth and balance
- Need regional limits on environment, development and population growth
- More acknowledgement of where population is concentrated in the region, that is, there is no references to fact that 80 per cent of population is in Calgary and that Calgarians may end up with a disproportionate voice on sub-regional concerns
- The *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* will impact the regional plan
- Environmental impacts of population growth need to be recognized
- Climate change needs to be acknowledged as a factor
- First Nations land is vital to agricultural interaction in the region
- The success of the regional plan will depend on successful enforcement and accountability



- The RAC advice does not go into enough detail on how thresholds will be determined and that conservation easements need to be defined
- More reliance on sound science, integrated planning and uses is required
- Property rights definition needs clarity; the constitution doesn't identify or enshrine property rights



You told us:

*Biodiversity and
environmental
protection should
be guiding
principles*



Healthy Economy

Economic development outcome statements for the South Saskatchewan Region are as follows:

- A healthy economy supported by our land and resources;
- A prosperous, resilient, competitive and diversified economy is sustained;
- The economic viability and competitiveness of the energy industry is maintained, while ensuring exploration and development are done in ways that respect the integrity of agriculture, observes sensitive habitats and protects water resources;
- Economic sectors are valued for their contributions to other land values (i.e., ecosystem functions, biodiversity, tourism and water supply);
- Cost-effective infrastructure supports economic growth and diversification;
- The value of ecological goods and services becomes a significant element of the regional economy; and
- The economic viability and competitiveness of industry is enhanced.

Support for RAC's advice and why?

- Support for energy development if done in a sustainable way without loss of highly productive agriculture land or areas identified for dense residential development.
- Farm land fragmentation may be supported for transportation corridors or urban development – a soft approach is recommended
- Agricultural land is needed for economic growth and jobs
- Agriculture is an important part of the regional economy
- Agriculture is the most vulnerable industry – small voice, but with big priorities and needs
- Incentives and not regulation needed for agriculture management
- Government has no right to regulate private-farming practices
- Include ecological goods and services
- Greater weight for ecological goods and services is a good idea
- Multi-use corridors are supported if they respect property rights
- Multi-use corridors can minimize linear disturbance
- Both water and energy use can be sustainable
- Water and access to water are important for a healthy economy
- Water should not be saved only for rivers because there is more opportunity to use it on the land



- Water storage areas are a driver for the economy.
- Tourism is an important part of the economy
- Aggregates should be on the list of economic sectors under consideration

What are the concerns and why?

- Water is widely used by cities and irrigation users so planning is required for water storage options and locations
- Need to understand what's realistic in water supply to ensure it can sustain growth
- Storage is not possible in Cypress County
- It's a reality that small farms need to fragment land to keep operations running
- There needs to be a way to generate revenue and a balance must be found
- Growth in agriculture is not always tied to size of land base
- Land-use plans should not create a cost burden for agricultural producers if changes are required
- Difficult to take a 50-year snapshot of agriculture given the evolving nature of market conditions
- Technology, climate change and water were noted
- More control over agriculture needed in riparian areas
- Many counties can't function without the oil and gas industry
- Oil and gas industry gets free reign in the region
- Industry damages roads in the region, leaving local citizen to clean up the mess
- Concerns were voiced about how ecological goods and services can be profit-generating
- Ecological goods and services protect water resources so we need to protect these to ensure a healthy economy
- Mitigation practices have been in place in many areas for generations without any formal Conservation Management Areas (CMAs)
- Local knowledge will be key to CMAs as farmers and ranchers are proven land stewards of native prairie
- There should be incentives/supports for farmers as they have implemented innovative techniques and are very open to advancing technology
- Regulatory burdens make it difficult to run your own business



You told us:

*Agricultural land
is needed for
economic growth
and jobs*



- Innovation will come on its own and doesn't need government regulation
- Government programs need to assist, not dictate, management options that landowners should/could explore
- There is a direct link between ecological health and economic health in the region, and the environment should have top priority for that reason
- Upgrade and support recreation and tourism; this sector is the best bet for a healthy economy for the region, or at least this portion of the region
- User fees or pay-as-you-go systems for recreational use and access could be used to support the economy, including by being diverted into a specific fund to support outdoor association
- There are pros and cons to tourism – it is good for the economy, but tourists can negatively impact land and environment
- If tourism is encouraged, there is a need to evaluate net benefit of losing oil and gas and agriculture to protected areas for tourism
- Tourism can't be at the expense of everything else
- Policies should promote tourism with passive recreational opportunities
- A recreation-based economy would be best for local economic strength, but that recreation and tourism need specific defined protected areas to achieve that strength
- Biggest conflicts between urban and rural is in recreation uses and that major tourism should be stressed, not recreation
- Trails should not be included in multi-use corridors
- Provision should be included for walking not just pathways when developing trails
- Need to limit high-impact recreational users and their impact to land
- Recreation and tourism needs to be further addressed – logging in Bragg Creek area is limiting access to recreation users
- Recreation should be more accessible, with appropriate services
- Some recreation areas are overused; some areas closer to Calgary have been shut down
- Random camping is a huge issue in the western edges of the region
- There are not enough facilities for camping, current and future needs must be addressed
- Unmanaged camping should not be permitted
- Firm enforcement should be replaced with firm stewardship through the education system
- Need to understand why campgrounds are not being used first, before moving to implementation



- Need to shift Crowsnest Pass area away from resources and towards tourism
- Headwater protection trumps forestry needs
- Phase out forestry in general, and oil and gas in high-value recreation areas
- Designate the Castle as a park or protected area, limiting forestry to ecological-based objectives and non-commercial activities
- Forestry helps manage healthy forests, FireSmart programs and helps local economy – like shops, construction, local infrastructure and local businesses
- Recommendations that cannot be enforced by provincial departments should not be included
- Need provincial support to protect agriculture and balance agricultural fragmentation; otherwise, we will never support population
- SSRP needs to give it teeth
- Cumulative effects are important but it doesn't have a place in the regulatory system – it's a policy piece
- Need to look at best practices in other jurisdictions to consider to use in the region
- Needs to be clarity around public vs. crown-owned land use
- Priority for economic activity should be on a small, sustainable scale
- There needs to be clearly defined thresholds on ecosystem impacts to support small-scale development
- Protect water quality first, ahead of any economic considerations
- Agriculture should be the focus in the region
- The current leasing system is working And should not be changed

What is Missing

- Clarification is needed to better understand this section
- What does “support” mean?
- Need a better definition of “healthy economy”
- Clarity about cumulative effects management was necessary
- Spell out how forestry will be sustained and managed
- Concepts missing from the advice, including the contributions of urban centres to the economy



You told us:

*The economy is
already too much
of a priority*



- Other industries that should be considered including:
 - wholesale trade
 - manufacturing
 - utilities.
- The regional plan should recognize various types of agriculture
- Should be best management practices for each type of agriculture
- More emphasis on how agriculture supports the environment, wildlife access, air, water, and soil
- Small-scale agriculture should be addressed in the plan
- RAC advice is missing the value of protecting wildlife zones
- All economic outcomes should be based on science
- More baseline information is needed before effective strategies can be developed
- Hutterite colonies should be considered in the plan
- Clarity on what is meant by market-based incentives
- Clarification on compensation plans and financial incentives
- Security of tenure on crown land leases will promote investment in agriculture
- Intensive livestock operations have a negative impact on water quality; should address this issue
- Better relationships and consultation is needed between industry and private land owners. A provincial mandate is needed to implement monitoring for agricultural land fragmentation
- The effects of grazing were not addressed thoroughly
- The environmental impact of oil and gas on agricultural land leases is not captured – this also relates to the issue of water
- Full consideration of climate change as it relates to water storage is needed
- Clarify the desired outcomes in order to integrate the various issues and balance conflicting interests
- The region needs more infrastructure to support a “knowledge-based” economy, including power lines, telephone lines, and improved internet capacity
- Ecological values should trump forest industry values
- Ecological goods and services should be paramount, the drivers of the economy



- Social impacts were ignored
- Energy, industry and population centres need direction to clarify surface and subsurface conflict
- Emphasize the efficient use of land to help us reduce our footprint on the land
- Put limits on growth
- Develop a renewable energy strategy
- Identify high-quality agricultural land
- Multi-use corridor concept along Highway 2 should include plans for a high-speed rail line
- User groups need more information on how to effectively manage recreation areas
- Recreation and tourism industries should work with other industries to create new opportunities
- Regional plan needs to promote resource development in the south
- All industries are looking for regulatory clarity in the regional plan
- Need for a better understanding of iconic tourism destination along with the infrastructure required to support not only iconic tourism but also tourism, agriculture, energy and forestry
- Urban recreation and tourism opportunities are ignored
- Need to emphasize other options
- This needs to be integrated on the same land-use plan
- Economic importance of water is not stressed enough
- Ignores urban recreation and tourism opportunities
- Consult specific user groups to better identify areas where recreation use is currently occurring



You told us:

*All industries
are looking for
regulatory clarity
in the regional
plan*



Healthy Ecosystems and Environment

Environmental outcome statements for the South Saskatchewan Region are as follows:

- The health of ecosystems, which consists of water, land, air and biodiversity, is valued by Albertans and needs to be sustained or improved through responsible stewardship.
- The biodiversity and ecosystem health and quality of forests, grasslands, parklands, aquatic environments, Badlands and dunes are sustained through responsible stewardship and are valued by Albertans.

Support for RAC's advice and why?

- Many of RAC's recommendations reasonable and important
- Praise for the attention to water issues in the RAC advice document
- Wetland protection principles are supported, and were identified as very important
- A lot of the conservation management areas (CMAs) are on public land
- Grazing leases will support CMA designations
- Some in favour of paid access for hunting as there are not enough areas for hunting as recreational activity
- Conservation areas noted in the advice exist because the landowners have taken good care of the land
- Frameworks already in place to allow municipalities to make land-use decisions are better
- Support the biodiversity section of the advice, while others thought that when an endangered species lives in a region, that region is already very well managed

What are the concerns and why?

- Water should be included in the regional plan vision statement
- Water allocation should be part of the SSRP process
- What is the relationship with Water for Life?
- Concerns about water use, including the need for the following:
 - headwater
 - source protection
 - supply
 - access



You told us:

Conservation areas noted in the advice exist because the landowners have taken good care of the land



- storage
- allocation
- carrying capacity
- irrigation.
- Development of water transfer mechanisms are out of line with RAC's direction
- More detail on how decisions are made to determine best practices
- Need information on how thresholds will be monitored and enforced
- Groundwater protection is deemed important
- Fracking is a concern and possibly harmful to the water system
- Increasing tourism could harm the local ecosystem
- Landowners are in the best position to look after conservation areas
- Opposition to the inclusion of private lands in conservation areas
- Landowners, farmers and ranchers are not being recognized for their stewardship
- Participants wondered how conservation areas can be managed when there are conflicting objectives – for instance the resource extraction and requests to protect the Castle region
- Need detail about how the advice recommendations will be implemented
- Identified CMAs are quite extensive and some mentioned that we should not sterilize CMAs by restricting too many uses
- CMAs may put grazing practices at risk
- Balance the needs of Calgary vs. rural needs
- Off-road vehicles can harm sensitive landscapes, so off-roading should not be allowed
- Participants expressed concern about oil and gas industry harming water quality and quantity

What is Missing

- Water storage, allocation, water valuation systems
- Population growth could be based on water limitations
- Water management framework will be critical for the region
- A finalized wetlands policy is not yet in place and is required in a regional context



You told us:

Business as usual can no longer continue on lands in the region



- Water; wetlands, headwaters, watersheds, groundwater need to deal with the whole system – a monitoring system and management system is needed
- Innovative ways to store water need to be found
- Watershed riparian areas must be protected as much as possible
- The definition of watershed integrity needs to be clarified
- Water used for energy development was identified as an issue; there is a requirement for access roads and power
- Compensation and other incentives for wetlands should be considered
- Who pays for conservation management and what are the parameters
- Agriculture should have the first rights to water in the region
- Allocation system should be “first in line, first in right”
- Water is a limiting factor on future growth so long term-planning needs to be improved
- Water needs to be protected and monitored at the source
- Local communities expressed a need for help with water quantity and quality issues
- There is a need to create buffer zones around park boundaries and conservation areas
- Tools need to be developed that will help private landowners deal with biodiversity
- More detail on conservation areas, especially specific to the Castle region which was heard from both the special places proponents and Castle Mountain Resort
- Conservation areas need detailed maps and description of management intent
- Clarity on management intent of conservation areas is needed
- Use existing knowledge/ best practices and pressure areas
- The conservation maps do not provide enough detail for municipalities
- RAC advice needed to better define conservation areas
- Greater steps are needed to address invasive species
- Mapping protected areas, wetlands and riparian areas will provide certainty for investment
- Conservation areas should be results based and not based on percentage of lands
- Important to complete air and water environmental frameworks before developing the draft plan



- Use same baseline data and information already developed and build from there (environmental research and land base assessment)
- Data should be shared and accessed widely for research
- Land-use bylaws need to address the installation of wind farms
- Strong provincial regulation and municipal boundary set backs are needed to avoid controversy
- Incentives to landowners to manage lands should be provided
- To ensure maintenance of healthy ecosystems in the region ask for local input to protect local land
- Only local residents know what's best for the land
- Use the expertise of local watershed groups
- More money should be put aside to protect critical habitat
- Too much energy was being spent on some animals, such as sage grouse
- Set thresholds to growth itself, as opposed to indicators
- Place a priority on connecting protected areas to avoid stranding 'islands' of biodiversity
- Air quality and irrigation districts missing
- Wetland policy needs to be regional because a provincial plan is too broad
- Conservation and protection of new areas important
- Protect water quality, promote forest diversity, improve air quality and protect surface water
- Need to connect conservation management areas and protected areas
- Support biodiversity
- Expand and improve recreational trails throughout the region

Other notable comments:

- Define best management practices and explain where they would apply
- Respect multiple-use areas in traditional recreational/industrial zones
- Better and more enforcement is needed for land users and uses
- Scale back industrial activities in recreation and tourism areas
- Promote forest diversity
- Restore, not just protect, biodiversity
- Limit logging in headwaters areas



- Address climate change
- Do not sterilize habitat areas for other uses
- Protect the Ghost, Elbow and Bow areas
- Enlarge Elbow and Kananaskis Country area protection based on water
- Provide payment to private land owners to promote land stewardship, and to protect water sources
- Charge fees for recreational users
- Tourism access in some areas should be limited
- Tourism should be more of a priority in the region
- The benefits of eco-tourism need to be considered
- Natural green zones should be left alone as they are vital to functional wetlands
- More groundwater mapping and inventory are needed
- A watershed baseline is needed to inform use of conservation stewardship tools and to ensure they achieve ecological and development objectives
- How will the balance between private and public land and land use will be developed?
- The difference between public, crown, private, and lease lands needs to be defined
- Government needs to recognize that landowners – especially ranchers and those holding grazing leases – are already land stewards
- If municipalities need to align with SSRP, provincial departments must also align
- More checks and balances for environmental monitoring
- Air quality recommendations are light
- Balance is important and not mutually exclusive
- We can support each other's environment and economy
- Best management practices for agricultural processes are needed
- Native grassland should be protected and used for responsible grazing
- More recreation areas are needed and 'motorcycle' hills and mud bogs should be set aside for hunters and recreationists
- Trails, like the Great Divide Trail, should be added to headwater mapping.
- The Eastern Slopes should be protected without limiting some users - do not prohibit people from pristine public areas.



- Why was the North American Waterfowl Management Plan not considered by RAC?
- It involves continentally significant areas and should be included
- Regional maps need to include aquifers, national and provincial parks
- Need more clarity on who will do it, how it will be done, and where the money to fund the work will come from
- More local studies/research required
- Public lands should be kept public – not for unmanaged grazing
- Grasslands are especially at risk
- Grazing needs more management and enforcement
- Need to confine cattle roaming and keep them out of ecologically sensitive areas
- Headwater protection requires that we keep agricultural animals out of those areas
- Need further definition for conservation management
- Concern that CMAs are too vague and, in some cases, too big
- Need to ensure money in government budget to buy lands for conservation purposes
- CMAs may not be able to navigate the regulatory stream; ability to apply for projects is different than the ability to develop them
- How 'powerful' will CMAs be?
- CMAs could be vital to tourism industry (clear compensation would have to occur for energy industry)
- Use environmental off-sets, but they must stay localized
- Need to ensure water use more efficiently
- Better manage downstream effects on water quality
- Need water meters in every single community to increase appreciation for and responsible use of water
- Much more emphasis on climate change
- CMAs should not have exclusive agenda – should incorporate local knowledge, especially if contrary to "science"
- Private landowners could be squeezed out if surrounded by CMAs
- Clarify if landowners/leaseholders will be compensated if oil and gas cancelled for CMAs
- If tenures are cancelled for CMAs, need to compensate at market-value
- Use educational tools to communicate how to meet recommendations



- All contributors (regulated and un-regulated) need to be part of the solution
- Protecting headwaters is key but there are insufficient resources for enforcement
- Wetland classification system needs clarity and should be simplified; should be more options for landowners and municipalities to reclaim and restore wetland areas
- Not enough baseline water data (huge gaps exist) and we need to fill data gaps with water planning
- All water stakeholders need to get on the same page
- Wetland restoration can lead to taking land from landowners (fear of strict policy implications)
- Transferable development credits should NOT be used as a right or a licence
- Aquifers must be protected
- Better watershed management required
- Management should not extend to private land
- No loss of native prairie – easements could be used if necessary
- Government should sell some of the private lands to local stewards
- Add carbon credits to private grasslands
- If Calgary is dumping into the river and that should be addressed
- More emphasis should be placed on river systems, coulees and other wildlife corridors
- Enforcement needs to be increased – more conservation officers are needed
- Backcountry users should pay a fee directed to an enforcement fund
- Headwaters are a primary resource and should be a priority
- Waterways need to be protected from livestock and ATVs – control access
- Irrigation systems need incentives and regulations for management
- Agriculture needs to access water
- Landfill and solid waste disposal is not addressed – should concentrate on regional landfills
- Albertans need to be educated on recreation restrictions and guidelines
- Government should provide direction and oversight to municipalities on expanding subdivisions – especially in the Castle, Waterton, and Porcupine Hills



- Intent of conservation management areas and the impact on landowners needs to be clarified
- Biodiversity decisions, policies and management plans need to be based on sound science
- Comprehensive plan is needed for invasive and out-of-control species; i.e., rabbits, cougars
- Air quality regulations and penalties need to be enforced – more monitoring is required
- Sustainable regional and local transportation systems are needed to improve air quality



You told us:

*Intent of
conservations
management
areas and the
impacts on
landowners need
to be clarified*



You told us:

Conservation areas noted in the advice exist because the landowners have taken good care of the land



You told us:

Encourage collaboration between municipalities



Healthy Communities

Regional healthy communities' outcome statements for the South Saskatchewan Region are as follows:

- The region is home to healthy people and healthy communities.
- Citizens in the region enjoy a high quality of life in communities that embrace active living and recreation.
- Community development needs are anticipated and accommodated.
- Land-use decisions consider cultural heritage and historical resources.
- The recreational preferences of the region's residents and visitors are met with a diversity of recreation opportunities.
- Aboriginal perspectives and aboriginal traditional land uses are respected.
- Recreational and tourism use of public land respect disposition, tenure and rights holders.

Support for RAC's advice and why?

- Need to build on current work to make communities healthier
- The Milk River Recreation Area has high tourism value, yet infrastructure is insufficient
- There is strong support for education and connected communities but how does it connect to healthy eco-systems?
- Support for recommendations contained in this section
- Balance needed between respecting landowner rights and respecting the environment
- Encourage support for multi-use corridors and collaboration between municipalities
- Recreational activities should be closer to Calgary where the population is rather than in their community
- Support for scenic designations e.g. Cowboy Trail, world heritage sites, Frank Slide, medicine wheels and other designations

What are the concerns and why?

- Population growth needs to be directed to less productive land to protect high-value agricultural land
- Regulations sometimes inhibit development of dense family housing to deal with population growth – tend to build out, not up

- Community design should not be addressed in the regional plan as smaller communities have limited resources
- Integration/collaboration is needed
- Edmonton and Calgary metropolitan plans will be crucial to the success and implementation of the regional plans
- Cooperation and collaboration is important to utilize local knowledge
- Lease holders want authority to manage land uses including First Nations
- Natural coulees and other special places are increasingly difficult to manage in terms of access; there's pressure to steward the land
- Cultural diversity should be better defined and should not be glossed over
- Aboriginal areas and archeological areas can be retained; but who will advocate for traditional agricultural areas?
- Increased public access leads to increased issues and concerns
- Provincial government involvement is too high for local community development; should focus on developing existing areas to minimize adding new infrastructure
- No need for tourism in southeast area of region
- If you want to preserve land, don't promote tourism
- Recreation access may explode and be unmanageable
- Increased tourism should parallel increased emergency services and health care
- What makes this region unique is that it is isolated
- Communities are dying because of lack of infrastructure
- Area from Foremost east is lacking
- Recreation needs to be appropriate based on land, schools, health care, etc., so the region is very unbalanced in terms of infrastructure and quality of life is not equal across the region
- Healthy communities must include healthcare and education
- If access is developed, must come with resources to enforce, protect and manage the area
- This section of RAC's advice is heavily focused on high-growth areas; more attention should be placed on rural areas
- No recognition between healthy people and healthy economies
- The idea is strongly supported but needs enforcement (existing legislation) and clarity on the recreation audience (residents or visitors) and specific landscape or value



You told us:

Need better integration between government and industry on different recreational opportunities

- Need better integration between government and industry on different recreation opportunities – trails and water based
- Consider the impact of irresponsible recreation activities on public and private land
- The lower tax base in shrinking communities leads to real challenges for recreation facilities and programs
- As farms get bigger, there are fewer people in rural communities; how does that contribute to a healthy community?
- Anything on the urban fringe is at probable risk of being expropriated
- Cities need to earn the right with high densities – how will the SSRP plan accommodate change over time?
- Planning needs to accommodate population growth in areas where there are depleting water resources and minimal/aging infrastructure
- Municipalities need better tools to manage and fulfill their roles
- Utility corridors, transmission lines and other public interest projects fragment agricultural land
- Small communities are vital to the region
- We have to be concerned that smaller communities may disappear
- Healthy communities should be driven by landowners
- Concern was expressed that the RAC advice did not support rural community expansion

What is Missing

- More consultation with industry
- Continuity and consistency is needed in planning approaches
- Trail systems should be emphasized and support commuters
- Accommodate future types of recreation users
- Solidify the understanding of the SSRP and agreements with aboriginal people
- Travel and tourism don't show depressed areas
- Clarify and educate around the terms "risk" and "managed land"
- RAC advice should support the recreation preferences of local residents
- Regulatory process creates a burden for the agriculture industry
- Better infrastructure design will promote the connection of the community
- The SSRP must be clear about what is meant by 'improved access'
- What kind of access?



- Need for density triggers
- The overall balance of public and private ownership is missing
- Tourism nodes should be a priority and strategically developed
- Recreation and tourism are separate concepts and should not be grouped together
- Motorized access has to be provided in public areas and it needs to be managed
- Scenic designations e.g. Cowboy Trail, world heritage sites, Frank Slide, medicine wheels was missing
- Entire sectors are not acknowledged, such as the health sector
- Healthy communities are not being developed under current policy
- The way we design our communities encourages people to have healthy lifestyle, that is, bike paths, parks, open space, etc
- Healthy communities depend on healthy ecosystems
- The focus for healthy communities is in urban centres, but outdoor recreation enthusiasts go into rural areas
- “Heritage viewscape” from municipal districts should be included in the plan
- High-value landscapes, however, should not be overdeveloped, in essence, Castle, Kananaskis
- Need new infrastructure to attract and retain tourists, residents, industry and youth
- Public safety needs to be included
- Community demographics changing – need to attract youth and families
- Airport is a good community investment
- Need more employment opportunities to attract new people
- Need bigger vision for trails – interconnect with B.C., K-country, along with bike trails
- No increase in motorized recreation
- Need to establish common ground between Calgary and other communities
- Old railroad tracks should be used as access to recreation
- Land-use decisions should consider the landowners



- The river corridor recreation area around the Bow River causes concerns regarding the following:
 - the area's remote location
 - liability of users
 - cost of maintaining the trail's infrastructure
- Remove recreational designation and involve area landowners
- Clarify terms regarding unmanaged access/unmanaged trails
- Need to ensure adequate public land base for recreation activities
- Rural needs are different from urban needs – more rural perspective is needed in this section
- An effective communication process is needed with First Nations
- First Nations need more opportunities
- Barriers to aboriginal inclusion should have been identified long ago – we should be working beyond that by now
- The general population does not understand SSRP nor its implications
- The plan needs to recognize that private landowners can provide recreation initiatives, although some ranchers and landowners expressed serious concerns about recreational users and impact on land
- Population growth will change the communities
- Are communities willing to welcome sustainability and more population growth?
- Consider diversity within the region and accept regional partnerships
- Educate the public about public land, crown land and disposition land
- Link healthy communities with a healthy environment, defined as more protected areas and more zones where single land uses prevailed over multiple uses
- Need for stepped-up enforcement action to promote sustainable recreational and other land uses
- Motorized recreation should be accepted as a permitted use
- We need to recognize the impacts of tourism on healthy communities
- Tourism is not compatible with mixed use, especially forestry
- Support development of affordable recreation opportunities and the designation of wildlife corridors before development proceeds
- More parks needed on Eastern Slopes
- Urban areas should contribute to the upkeep of rural recreation opportunities and facilities



- Balance industry and recreational uses
- More designated trails needed
- Locate recreation areas where we see the highest and best use of the lands
- Recreation and tourism should take priority over industry
- Tourism should reflect needs of the land
- Rotate areas used for tourism with logging
- Consider non-motorized trails in certain areas and use regional facilities to meet needs of several municipalities
- Recreation and tourism were portrayed as a vehicle to community health and as a foundation for sustainability
- Government should encourage small business recreation opportunities, a regional hiking trail system, all-season trails and protection of existing vehicle access to recreation opportunities
- Encourage and protect more primitive recreation opportunities to continue to make some places more difficult to access
- Trail systems should be constructed away from private lands, and there should be recognition that watershed protection and backcountry recreation are compatible uses that should be encouraged in tandem
- Decisions about the location of recreational areas do not make sense to the region
- No tourism on agricultural land
- Participants noted that oil and gas development has a negative impact on recreational areas
- Look at recreational activities at a sub-regional level
- Rural communities suffer at the hands of urban communities
- More money, support and infrastructure are needed to maintain rural communities. Facilities such as hospitals were one example
- Regional plans should address alignment with municipal decision making
- Municipalities need to have resources and the capacity necessary to implement the regional plans – it's a lot to put on a municipality's plate unless it's properly funded
- Coordination is missing between agencies in major recreation corridor areas
- Support for multi-use trails, but appropriate facilities are needed
- Trails should connect urban centres



- Destination and tourism routes may limit resource access
- Important to manage so resource access is not sterilized or the cost of business becomes too great
- We need multi-purpose facilities – arenas, pools, etc. – for growing demographics in many communities
- We must provide enhanced, sustainable access to recreational water bodies
- Promote parks and recreational opportunities in the region
- Consider environmental and community impact of iconic tourism development
- Urban sprawl is not adequately covered in the advice
- More detail is required on the relationship with, and roles of, municipal governments
- Smaller communities may not have resources for long-range planning
- Government was advised to provide a toolkit of best practices to communities and municipalities
- How we will deal with sub-regional plans?
- How will we meet the infrastructure needs of the region?
- Address concerns about new legislation and regulation enforcement
- Too much focus on outdoor recreation and not enough on our cultural heritage
- Protect good agricultural land – urban areas are gobbling up the good agriculture land but there are also concerns that municipalities may not be able to develop out
- Locking land for conservation areas limits the economic potential
- Concerns about access to health care and quality of life in rural communities
- There is a need for other sub-regional plans
- A vision for urban centres is missing
- Large centres have too much say already
- Transmission lines and other public interest projects fragment agricultural land
- More emphasis needed on population growth, the pressures of city growth and making rural development a priority
- More recreation opportunities need to be created



- Aging infrastructure must be replaced
- There is a need for recreation development and infrastructure though there were concerns about the impact of recreationists on the landscape and timber harvesting



You told us:

*Municipalities
need to have
resources and the
necessary capacity
to implement
regional plans*



Land-Use Direction and Management Intent

Support for RAC's advice and why?

- Land-use classifications are appropriate
- The advice is good, but the regional plan will come down to regulation and implementation
- Support for the concept of CMAs, but it needs to be better defined
- Are we conserving land uses or land bases?
- What are the parameters of CMAs
- How will CMAs change the existing way the areas are being used
- Stakeholder input is vital for regional planning

What are the concerns and why?

- Who will be managing integrated conservation management plans (ICMPs)?
- Interest about what will take precedence – ICMP or special places
- Will candidate CMAs protect species at risk
- Compensation to landowners is very important
- Tenure holders believe that there is a present land value and placing land-use restrictions will affect that value
- Where do grazing tenures fit in the regional plan
- Government should not be doing any planning in the region at all and the advice of the RAC serves only to complicate how people do business
- Landowners and leaseholders need the ability to control access to land and have the proper support from authorities to enforce this control
- Concerns about mixed-use forests
- The management intent wording suggests support for resource development but the priority should be recreation
- Recreation and forestry are not compatible on the same land base
- Multiple-use is not always possible or desirable
- There should be exclusive use zones in some areas
- Multiple use should be encouraged
- Opposition to random camping and suggestions to designate non-serviced campground areas and that Kananaskis Country should be recreation only, no mixed used



- Certain areas, such as Wild Horse Plain and Twin River Heritage forests are more valuable as tourism and recreation assets
- These areas cannot take a large influx of tourists and should be conserved
- The Eastern Slopes should be one conservation management area
- The Castle-Waterton conservation management area is too large
- Too much 'protection' leads to too many conflicts
- Native rangeland could be designated for mining, ranching or converted to agricultural land.
- New regulations could hinder future opportunities
- Flexibility and balance is needed
- Compensate industry for lost income where uses are denied
- Compensate landowners for voluntary stewardship
- New conservation areas should be considered only if there are gaps in the area
- Conservation Management Area is too large and will have a huge impact on the area
- Contradictions identified between CMA and recreation tourism designations suggest they are in conflict
- Want detail about how government will address the management of recreation activities?
- There is no LUC that has business as usual. They all have risk and uncertainty written in for the energy sector.
- Land-use categories introduce risk to energy industry
- Industry has a lot invested in this area, so pulling them out equals big money
- How will landowners be compensated by any land-use designations causing economic loss
- Sound science and data should be the bottom-line determinant for land-use designations, especially CMAs.
- Cluster urban development to promote agriculture
- How are leased lands affected by the potential CMAs?
- The CMAs will be heavily scrutinized – the government needs to clarify its vision for active rangelands



You told us:

Landowners and leaseholders need the ability to control access to land and have the proper support from authorities to enforce this control



What is Missing

- This section of RAC advice missing maps that reflect existing conditions
- The province needs to support municipalities
- Need transfer of credit tool
- Clarity on energy use
- Plan should consider all lands that contribute to different land objectives
- Recognition of valued landscapes on private lands and protected from resource development
- Detail and clarification about the management intent of conservation management areas
- Take into account federal policies regarding land adjacent to federally owned lands
- Specifics on growth management need to be included in the regional plan
- Population growth leads to increased demand
- How will high-conservation values be determined on private versus public land?
- We need no-go zones where multiple uses are not appropriate
- Focus on native grasslands, river systems
- Enforcement is the key; province, not local governments, must lead
- Consider population limits and conserve primitive lands
- Specifics are needed on tools and intents
- The government must show it is committed to realizing this vision
- We've been here before and there is no guarantee any of this will be followed up in 10 years
- Encourage new residents to move to rural areas rather than big cities
- Municipalities support rural population growth because it helps smaller communities grow and stay alive
- Thresholds are required to define and manage cumulative impacts
- The "first in line, first in right" water allocation system is disappearing but is needed
- More education is required to inform resident of the realities in forestry – "we need to learn from the Kelowna fire"
- The agricultural land base in Rockyview and other areas need to be preserved
- Water storage attracts development – this needs to be considered in context of ecological impacts



- Best management practices will encourage farmland conservation and minimize fragmentation
- Regional planning should capture the fact that co-existence has to be the reality for multi-users
- Public information on current practices is needed before discussing what best management practices will work in the region
- Benefits for landowners have to be greater
- More education needed on wetlands and their value to society
- Detailed map of drainage system is required
- Scenic designation is missing and user-pay systems must go back to local area for specific sub-regional uses
- Need more public education on all issues
- The term “land-use” is too vague – compatible uses can’t be in every land use
- Contain Calgary’s growth
- Consider intensive livestock and irrigation as ‘other classes’
- Stewardship should be voluntary not mandatory on private lands
- Grazing is an important management tool
- Define market-based incentives
- Acreages are taking good land away from agriculture use
- Management tools are already in place, but aren’t being implemented
- Establish sub-zones within the SSRP
- Conservation on public land needs more local input
- No umbrella plans – allow landowners to be stewards with assistance/ support from government
- Economic impacts of regional plan on statutory consents must also be addressed
- Security of tenure and grazing leases is required
- All stakeholders should be consulted on revisions to the Public Lands Act
- Specifics and clarity are needed for modified harvesting practices
- Selective harvesting rather than clear cutting should be used
- Existing forest is too small for development – leave it alone
- Native grasslands should be developed in some areas to support economic goals
- CMAs should prohibit damaging activities



You told us:

Conservation Management Areas should prohibit damaging activities

- Enforce good land-use practices on public land and encourage conservation on private land
- Maximize tourism promotion
- We received opposing views on whether to increase emphasis on recreation and tourism in Foothills
- Limit motorized activities to suitable lands and institute a levy or user fee to support enforcement
- Oldman River basin should be its own regional area
- Irrigation needs should be the top water priority



Additional Comments

The following additional comments and questions were raised during the stakeholder workshops that were deemed outside of the five category areas but were captured as part of the stakeholder feedback. Many comments were about the regional plan review process and the language in the RAC advice document.

Definitions, Regional Planning Process and Requests for Information

- Include support for industry' and 'consider cultural diversity' definitions the draft SSRP
- Need to define terms throughout and provide a glossary
- Remove the word Saskatchewan and call it the Southern Alberta plan
- Explain implementation process
- Explain who is responsible
- Explain who and what will define measures and conversation tools
- Support for Land-use Framework and the need for regional planning
- Need detail about who pays for recreation facilities, trail maintenance, enforcement, compensation and conservation tools
- Conflict possible between geographic and issue-specific sub-regional plans
- Potential for sub-regional plans to cross regional plan boundaries
- Compliance with regional plans could be administratively onerous and expensive for municipalities
- RAC advice is a high-level document; concern was expressed about the smaller details
- Culture and recreation need to be defined better
- Section 6.2 unfairly indicts communities for insufficient knowledge; more to do with lack of resources and financial support from province
- Refer to ORRSC response to RAC advice for consideration of issues and concerns
- Why the change at election? For instance:
 - Respect of private property rights
 - Lack of interest
- Fear of losing rights (local vs. federal)
- Make land-use data readily and publically available



- Want information on population projection breakdown for urban and rural municipalities
- *Municipal Government Act* – looking for clarification as to “cultural” vs. “recreational” – the
- MGA doesn’t identify culture specifically
- How is industry going to dial into the GIS mapping system info online?
- Need to post session PPT to Land Use Secretariat website ASAP
- Complete wetland policy
- Concern about economic benefit and cost of this process to the province
- Update presentation on the management intent on conservation areas\
- The presentation says ‘no access’ but there will be access to existing tenures.
- Concern that after all this process the government will do what it wants anyway
- How do you withdraw interests?
- How do you compensate for land?
- This process is like speed dating
- Comments seem to go into a “black hole” with no response
- How will government ensure all regions are working together?
- Ranking differences and rating seem to lead too much, results can be interpreted the way GOA wants to
- Government doesn’t have staff, funding or resources to implement this plan
- Prefer to see a focused, effective action rather than a volume of empty promises
- Where is the reference to the input that has already been provided through phase one of this process? Not apparent in RAC advice
- The government has off-loaded economic costs to landowners; it is a three-legged stool with a weak leg; it’s not balanced
- Consider shadow populations, and their impacts
- Concern regarding the balance of interest of those on the RAC; there was no one from a university, arts council, etc.
- A broader range of RAC expertise is needed
- Want to know how to resource the needed partnerships; there should be a model for communities to follow in place
- Region is too large



- Please no grandstanding
- Concern with 10-year review
- What is the certainty that schedule will be followed?
- Way too much information to cover in a single session
- The recreation/tourism section is a confusing mess
- Have all the information in one place and correctly referenced
- What are we trying to fix?
- Municipalities have been managing land in their communities for years – why do we need more rules?
- We don't want Calgary in the region – there are too many significant differences between Calgary and rural southern Alberta
- Clarify the “blue dot” – First Nation reserves on the legend of the map on page 11
- Could it be that these are the historic sites? If so, please indicate as such
- Municipal District of Bighorn is not happy with exclusion of Banff
- Headwaters need to be addressed. Re: supply
- Supply connection to distribution needs to be made Bighorn supplies 40 per cent of water, Banff supplies 60 per cent of water to the population of southern Alberta
- Government should give five per cent of royalties to landowners
- Need separate consultation on economic
- This workshop is not effective
- Not enough time for economic concerns
- Eastern Slopes plan reflected a balance to accommodate different uses in different areas
- Who represented motorized recreation on RAC?
- Who selects what goes into the draft plan?
- There were no individuals on the SSRP RAC specializing in recreation and tourism – and that is obvious in the RAC recommendations
- No names submitted in fall of 2008 from motorized recreation group sat on the RAC Impact of industrial development in the area suggests it is already too late for this plan
- How many amendments to LARP so far?
- Recognize that locals know the land best and can provide very viable input



- What is the necessity for the Calgary Regional Partnership (CRP) when the SSRP is addressing the same issues for the same areas?
- How will this impact be brought together?
- Disparate views how will this be brought together as one consensus document
- Conflicting messages regarding water allocation
- Devil is in the details, which is missing in the advice
- This is a policy-level document, not the day-to-day solutions to problems
- Document is vague and vagueness leads to meaninglessness
- Vagueness creates too many uncertainties
- Concern SSRP will negatively impact the ability of business to compete, that is, all regional plans will create different standards of doing business
- Stakeholders could provide better input if advice was clearer and more concise
- Concern this phase of consultation is convoluted
- The impact of SSRP on private property has the potential to be a significant political issue
- Respecting landowner rights; ultimately the oil/gas agencies are trumping the landowner rights
- Same for power lines, municipal infrastructure etc.
- Need detail about funding mechanisms to address user-fees
- Concern subsequent regional plans will be “cut and pasted” from first two, despite regional differences
- RAC should be able to vet draft plan before going public
- This was turned down
- Would like to see Phase 4 before approval by Cabinet
- Can we provide input on both private and public lands?
- Learning from other plans should be implemented in real time, don't wait five years
- The words “land use” and “land conservation” appear to be used interchangeably
- Will the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* (ALSA) deprive me of my rights?
- The terms “conservation” and “protection” are used a lot. Need definitions
- Did RAC consider the Suffield area?
- ALSA didn't recognize landowners as stakeholders and stewards of the land



- Return decisions-making power and authority to landowners and leaseholders because they know the land base and can also increase safety of public users on lease lands
- Definitions are required for certain terms and respect the implications of their use (re: management)
- How is this plan going to be different than that from the '80s?
- Will there be a review for the endangered species yet?
- Too much bureaucratic process with the regional planning process
- Consider local information
- Need clarification of the stakeholder process
- Need better framework for cooperation between departments
- Need to have minimum of five landowners on committee writing plan from SE Alberta
- Don't trust Alberta parks
- Say one thing and do another! E.g. recent acquisitions of land for writing on stone
- Bill 2 is a threat to their property rights
- Landowners want government to get their permission before building power lines on their property

Workshop Notification and Preparation

- Stakeholders asked for more notice and details about the session format in order to prepare for future sessions
- There was VERY POOR communication of the "workshop format" and the length of time commitment required for the stakeholder meeting
- Better education is needed for decision-makers
- Complaint about short notice
- Difficult to go through the material in advance
- New town council in place since the start of SSRP so it is especially important to get the information out well in advance
- Refer to ORRSC response to RAC Advice for consideration of issues and concerns
- Invite should say read documents in advance of meeting
- RAC booklets should have been received earlier to permit time to review
- There needs to be improved communications to small rural communities
- They don't read the newspaper, can't get local radio stations, etc.



- More ads for consultation
- Need a better way to notify Albertans on workshop format
- Not enough time to go through materials
- What was broken and needed to be fixed to create the need for regional plans?
- Following adoption of the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) many oil leases were Cancelled Why? (Assumption that there may be similar kinds of implications for people in the SSRP area)
- Many individuals on the RAC represented a variety of groups and organizations
- Where do ordinary landowners fit into the RAC make up?
- How were RAC members appointed?
- A variety of groups represent different areas of interest as they respond to the RAC advice
- Is the intent of the regional plan to synthesize these various interests to create a “big picture plan” that reflects the desires of these groups?
- Shouldn't have had Medicine Hat and Foremost on same day

Suggestions for Implementation of the SSRP

- GOA needs more resources to promote, advise and enforce management intent
- Refer to ORRSC response to RAC Advice for consideration of issues and concerns
- More conversations with other focus groups should be included in the draft plan process
- MGA Section 632 – MDPs may include recreational pursuits – maybe should be a “must” for the health of communities, but smaller communities don't have the finances to do it properly
- The Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta (AEPA) website is a great resource that should be considered: www.agpartners.ca/aepa
- Need to make all map's spatial/open data available to the public
- Biodiversity monitoring – finish strategy, use what has been developed up to this point
- A lot of plans are in place in Alberta. Put them into place/enact/evaluate
- 5.10 review required because the immediate concern can be addressed; variance, amendment that it actually functions
- Would like to see how this session is reflected in the draft plan



- Management of conservation areas should be done by local people
- Recreation and tourism: current amenities in Pincher Creek (scenic market) are being marketed to folks in Calgary but the local community does not receive any benefits
- Calgary and area other end of the spectrum than areas outside of the Calgary area
- There should be education on the difference between rural and urban perspectives
- Water licenses are not distributed fairly
- Managing expectations is an important piece
- Long-term strategy, not instant results
- Sub-regional plans are a “must” since Medicine Hat is so different from Calgary
- Which Bill takes precedence – Bill 36 or Bill 10?
- Oldman River Basin should be under a separate plan
- I support a sub-region plan for this area.
- There is concern about the ALSA especially in view of the LARP fallout (oil leases – see bullet three above)
Will there be compensation for losses resulting from such cancellations?
- There is a feeling of distrust and uncertainty with regard to the implementation of the plan
- There should be some education on the difference between rural and urban perspectives
- Provide an appropriate timeline for the development of the regional plan
- The SSRP planning process needs to be more transparent and should be driven by communities
- Need all regional plans to be uniform in timing of implementation
- Want to be sure politicians will follow through with SSRP
- No guarantee of change ⇨ – we have been here before
- Concerned with following through on this process
- Uphold LUF
- We are at a tipping point
- Need mention of specific thresholds
- Everyone wants clarity
- Too wishy-washy at this point in time



- The Milk River Watershed is doing planning initiatives and has not received information as to how they will be implemented into the SSRP
- This would provide a great comfort level for the area
- Early inclusive consultation with all stakeholders is important
- There are certain areas overlapping the region; headwaters can't be considered in isolation
- Outcomes need to be set by LUF, especially water
- Draft plan processes; who is working on them?
- Concern regarding support to municipalities to amend plans/documents to align with SSRP
- What funding will be provided and available to municipalities to align their plans with SSRP?
- First Nations concern about how their lands fit into SSRP and how important the SSRP is to their communities
- Project timeline?
- Education builds consensus
- Ensure there is proper consultation on the big-detail decisions before the draft plan is made
- Create a conversation where people/stakeholders can be part of the conversation for developing the solutions
- Plans like SSRP should have contingencies for education
- Implementation tools are imperative for the success of the plan
- Land-use issues: private vs. public ownership.
- Create a conversation where people and stakeholders can be part of the decisions for how solutions will be made
- Stakeholders need to be involved in the tough decisions
- Make sure there is proper consultation on the big decisions
- Advice seems inherently dishonest regarding the regulatory impacts that will follow the adoption of SSRP
- Make recommendations in conjunction with the implied amendments to all impacted regulations
- Mapping watershed harmonious all the way through
- Need more transparency in how provincial policies are integrated into regional plan
- So vague, don't know how will impact us in region



Workbook Comments

- Set priorities in the workbook to view where the high needs are
- Need workbook in a word document – for companies making a submission, they can circulate to make additional comments before submission
- Good language overall
- Good job