Working Towards the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan
Agenda

Welcome, Introductions and Workshop Process

Regional Vision and Outcomes

Economic Growth

Biodiversity and Conservation

Integrated Management of Public Land And Stewardship of Private Land

Advancing Air and Watershed Management

Strengthening Communities, Enhancing Recreation and Cultural Opportunities and Inclusion of Aboriginal Peoples
Our Purpose Today

- Review the draft SSRP
- Seek your feedback on the draft
  - Where do you support the draft and why?
  - Where do you have concerns and why?
  - What is missing?
- Your feedback is important – it will be considered as government finalizes the regional plan
- Submissions and workbooks due January 15, 2014
Ground Rules - Facilitators

- Facilitators are here to listen to you
- Your contributions will be captured and included in the summaries of the Phase 3 consultations
  - Summaries will be publicly available
- Your feedback will be considered as government finalizes the regional plan
Ground Rules - Participants

- Everyone has opportunity for equal “air time”
- Be open to the common good and the needs of others
- Voice your interests and be willing to listen to others
- It is OK to disagree
- Every person has a voice that matters and a right to be heard
- Have respect for - and be open to - multiple viewpoints, including those different from yours
Almost three years of consultation on land-use planning in 2005 - 2008
Albertans wanted a PLAN to manage impacts
Result: Land-use Framework
- coordinated regional planning
- based on major watersheds
- meet each region’s unique challenges, opportunities
- manage combined impact of all activities
- conservation and stewardship strategy
- better balance future land use, conservation
Purpose of a Regional Plan

- Set a **vision** for a region over several decades
- Set the overall **outcomes and objectives** for a region
- Consider **how the activities in one region may impact other regions**
- Cannot direct uses on lands under **federal jurisdiction**
- Not intended to describe how your neighbourhood will look in the future, or set rules about **your local property**
Regional Plans
- High level strategy
- Lays out “vision” for the region

Legislated (e.g. MGA)
- Intermunicipal Development Plans (optional)

Non-Legislated
- Other Intermunicipal Plans (optional)

Where appropriate

Municipal Development Plan

Area Structure Plans (Optional)
- Area Redevelopment Plans (Optional)

Land-use Bylaws (Compulsory)

Subdivision and Development Approval
Public Land and Regional Plans

Regional Plans
- High level strategy
- Lays out “vision” for the region

Integrated Resource Management Plans

Provincial Resource Management Policy, Standards and Guidelines

Regional Scale Plans
Sub-Regional Scale Plans

Specific Approvals for activities, dispositions and tenure
Details of the Components

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan will define the specific vision, the strategic directions that identify priority areas of focus, and the outcomes for each region in a manner that considers and integrates the regional perspective with the provincial picture.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan establishes the objectives and strategies that will be implemented to achieve the vision and outcomes for the region. Indicators at the strategy and outcome level are also identified as a means by which to evaluate the level of progress made towards achieving the desired outcomes for the region.

Regulatory Details Plan

The Regulatory Details Plan contains information regarding the mandatory (i.e., regulated) actions that land-use decision makers and users must comply with in order for the vision and outcomes to be achieved for the region.

Contains regulatory provisions that may take the following form:
- Must not approve
- Must evaluate and apply
- Must do
- Must not do

The Implementation Plan and Regulatory Details Plan are linked in that some strategies and actions may be implemented through regulatory provisions.
SSRP Challenges

- Water Security
- Expanding Communities
- Habitat & Species at Risk
- Infrastructure Needs
- Maintain Agricultural Land Base
- Tourism Growth
- Managing Recreation
- Resource Development
- Sustainable Forests
Balance between society, development and environment

Key areas:
- Population growth
- Water supply and demand
- Conservation of valued landscapes and biodiversity
- Economic development
- Regional air and water thresholds
- Social objectives
Regional Planning Process

- Step 1: Regional Profile
- Step 2: Terms of Reference, Regional Advisory Council
- Step 3: Phase 1 Consultation (gather insights, concerns, advice)
- Step 4: RAC Advice to Government of Alberta Regarding a Vision for the South Saskatchewan
- Step 5: Phase 2 Consultations
- Step 6: Draft Regional Plan
- Step 7: Phase 3 Consultations
- Step 8: Final Regional Plan
- Step 9: Mandatory 5 Year Review of Final Regional Plan
- Step 10: Mandatory 10 Year Review and Reapproval by Cabinet
Vision

- Draft Plan pages 35 – 37 & 58
Vision

Southern Alberta is a diverse, healthy, vibrant and prosperous region where the natural beauty of the mountains, foothills, farmlands and prairies are managed so that citizens feel connected to the land and its history. The region is a thriving place that offers a wide range of opportunities to residents and visitors alike. Social, economic and environmental values are effectively achieved with shared stewardship and an integrated approach. The quality and integrity of the landscape is sustained through the use of science, innovative thinking, traditional aboriginal and community knowledge, recognizing the interests of all Albertans.
Regional Outcomes

- Economy is growing and diversified
- Biodiversity & ecosystem functions are sustained
- Air quality is managed to support healthy ecosystems and human needs
- Watersheds are managed to support healthy ecosystems and human needs
- Community development needs are anticipated & accommodated
- Quality of life of residents is enhanced through increased opportunities for recreation & preservation of cultural heritage
- Aboriginal peoples are included in land-use planning
Discussion

- Draft Plan pages 35 – 37 & 58

- Does the proposed regional vision reflect your personal vision and expectations for the South Saskatchewan Region?
  - Which portion or parts do you support and why?
  - Are there areas of concern and why?
  - Is there anything missing?

- Do the proposed regional outcomes reflect your expectations for the South Saskatchewan Region?
  - Are there areas of concern and why?
  - Is there anything missing?
Economic Growth

Outcome #1

- Draft Plan pages 59 – 66
- Tables 1 & 2, Appendix A, pages 105 – 110
- Appendix E, pages 116 - 118
Economic Growth

- Many of the economic strategies are provincial in scope
- Draft SSRP reinforces, at a regional level, GoA policy direction which supports continued economic growth and diversification
- The draft SSRP establishes objectives and land-use strategies to support key sectors
Economic Growth

- **Energy (Petroleum and Natural Gas, Coal and Minerals)**
  - Opportunities for responsible exploration, development and extraction of energy resources are maintained
Economic Growth

Renewable Energy

- Opportunities for the responsible development of the region’s renewable energy industry are maintained in support of Alberta’s commitment to CO2 emission reduction targets and economic development

- Value-added opportunities that enhance the sustainability of Alberta’s industries and communities are created
Co-location of linear infrastructure

- The region’s infrastructure is planned to facilitate economic and population growth and efficient use of land

Surface Materials

- Opportunities for the responsible development of surface materials resources are maintained on public lands
Economic Growth

- **Agriculture**
  - The region’s agricultural industry is maintained and diversified

- **Forestry**
  - The region’s forestry industry is maintained and diversified

- **Tourism**
  - The region is positioned as a world-class, year-round tourism destination.
  - See side bar on page 64.
Discussion

- Draft Plan pages 59 – 66
- Tables 1 & 2, Appendix A, pages 105 – 110
- Appendix E, pages 116 - 118

Do you support the suite of economic objectives and strategies for achieving a growing and diversified economy for the South Saskatchewan Region?

- Are there areas of concern and why?
- Is there anything missing?
Outcome #2

- Draft Plan pages 38 - 41, 66 – 75
- Appendices D, pages 114 - 115 and F, pages 118 - 122
- Schedules C, pages 143 - 155 and D, page 157
Regional plans are developed using a **cumulative effects approach** which considers the combined effects of activities taking place over time.

Cumulative effects are considered to be the combined effects of **past, present and reasonably foreseeable future** land-use activities on the environment.
Conserving and Maintaining the Benefits of Biodiversity

- **Biodiversity** = variety of land covers (grassland, forests, wetlands), habitats (land/water) and species

- **Ecosystem services** = human benefits provided by healthy ecosystems and the biodiversity within them, for example (side bar page 23):
  - food, timber, fresh water
  - flood control, water purification
  - recreation, spiritual, cultural values
Conserving and Maintaining the Benefits of Biodiversity

- Complete a **biodiversity management framework** for the region by the end of 2014
  - A biodiversity management framework is a new approach to support cumulative effects management of important elements of biodiversity that are affected by land uses in the region

- **Eastern slopes:**
  - Critical headwaters for Alberta and prairie provinces
  - Habitat for grizzly, fisheries

- **Prairie:**
  - Limited remaining intact grasslands
  - 80% of Alberta’s species at risk
Objectives:

- Terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity are maintained
- Species at risk are recovered; and key grasslands habitat is sustained
- Areas are added to the regional network of conservation areas
- Biodiversity and healthy functioning ecosystems continue to provide a range of benefits to communities in the region and Albertans
- Long-term forest ecosystem and resiliency is maintained
Biodiversity Management Framework

- Example Indicators (work ongoing)
  - Eastern Slopes Sub-region
    - Grizzly bear recovery
    - Ecosystem health
  - Grasslands Sub-region
    - Native grassland
    - Important/representative species habitats
- Targets for indicators will guide decisions about future and existing land-use activities
  - Limiting motorized access in grizzly core habitat
  - Managing linear footprint management is key
Biodiversity Management Framework

- Need a **full range of management approaches and tools**
- Major actions supporting the objectives and targets established in the framework
  - Conservation areas network
  - Linear footprint management planning
  - Integrated Land Management tools
    - Coordinated road planning between industries
    - Re-use of existing linear disturbance where feasible
    - Reclamation of disturbances not required for new development
Conservation Areas

- Create **new conservation areas** on provincial Crown land (side bars, page 39 and 67)
  - Legally protected areas that are relatively undisturbed
  - Maintain ecological processes for biodiversity
- Specifically for the South Saskatchewan Region:
  - Enhanced headwaters protection
  - Grizzly bear recovery
  - Conservation of intact native grasslands
  - Address conservation gaps – foothills parkland/ fescue
Conservation Areas – Criteria

- Areas with **little to no industrial activity**

- Areas **representative of the biodiversity** in the region (e.g. grasslands, grizzly habitat, landforms)

- Areas of **sufficient size**

- Areas that **support aboriginal traditional use**
Conservation Areas – Management Intent

- Maintaining **biodiversity and headwaters protection**
- Managed to **minimize or prevent new land disturbance**

- Land disturbance associated with oil and gas, mining, cultivated agriculture and commercial forestry operations are not considered compatible – honour existing PNG
- Private surface and freehold minerals rights will be honoured
- Hunting, fishing and trapping will continue (in accordance with exiting laws)
- OHV use where permitted, will be managed to designated trails and areas (see Schedule C, pages 143 – 155)
Conservation Areas – Eastern Slopes

- Currently 22% of region’s eastern slopes are protected as provincial conservation areas.
- The proposed new and expanded areas will add an additional 11% of protection of the eastern slopes (about 2.5 times the size of Waterton Lakes National Park).
- New legislative protection will be provided to these areas.
- Proposed conservation areas in this area focus on prime protection zones as described in the Eastern Slopes Policy.
- Protection of headwaters and water security continue to be key management priority.
Conservation Areas – Castle

- Castle has experienced a high demand for multiple uses for decades
- The management intent for this area will be for maintaining biodiversity and headwaters protection
  - The Castle Conservation Area PLUZ (Map K) will be managed the same as the Wildland Provincial Park, but forestry practices which support the management intent for the area will be permitted. Enhanced forestry practices may include winter only operations, restricted access and enhanced buffer zones on riparian areas
- Both the Wildland Provincial Park and Conservation Area PLUZ (side bar page 69) will be managed to minimize or prevent new land disturbance
Conservation Areas – Pekisko Heritage Rangeland

- A number of ranchers, energy industry and other stakeholders in the area have expressed interest in increasing conservation
- Propose to establish a Heritage Rangeland and continue to work with ranchers and other stakeholders as part of a combination of approaches
- Objective is conservation of rough fescue grasslands within the Foothills Parkland Natural Sub-region and recognition of stewardship and conservation efforts
- Assign responsibility for administration and management of the Heritage Rangeland (Map J)
Discussion

- Draft Plan pages 38 - 41, 66 – 75

- Do you support the concept of a biodiversity management framework for the region?
  - Are there areas of concern and why?
  - Is there anything missing?

- Do you support the proposed conservation areas in the eastern slopes, Castle and Pekisko areas?
  - Are there areas of concern and why?
  - Is there anything missing?
Outcome #2 - continued

- Draft Plan pages 41 - 45, 66 – 75
- Appendices G, pages 123 - 126 and H, pages 127 - 129
Eastern Slopes - Green Area Public Land

- **Existing management intent for Green Area will continue** – timber production, watershed, resource development, wildlife and fisheries, recreation, grazing, and other uses

- **Objectives for biodiversity and healthy ecosystem function** will be incorporated into this – specific focus on grizzly bear recovery

- **Headwater protection** continues as a management priority – including as a priority for forest management

- Incorporation of the **Eastern Slopes Policy** into the regional plan and its planning elements as appropriate
Eastern Slopes - Green Area Public Land

- Enhanced management of human footprint - **Linear Footprint Management Plan** to be developed, with initial focus on key areas of headwaters and grizzly habitat (completed by end of 2017)
- Expanded recreation opportunities with priority recreation and access management planning
  - North Castle, Porcupine Hills, Livingstone and Willow Creek
- Incorporation of existing **Integrated Resource Plans**
- Continue to work with partners within and outside of government to manage risk associated with **invasive species**
Recreational Use - On plan approval:
- Public access to Green Area public lands will continue
- Rules related to watercourses, waterbodies and wetland areas, and avoiding industrial facility areas for safety

Through plan implementation:
- Future access and camping management determined through trail mapping, and through recreation and access management planning and linear footprint management planning
- Consultation for planning and collaboration to determine the appropriate trail network
- Promotion of responsible land use and shared stewardship through outreach and education programs
- Use of Public Land Use Zones
Existing management intent for White Area will continue – public land is part of the agricultural landscape; it is managed for various uses including agriculture, recreation, soil and water conservation, and fish and wildlife habitat.

An additional clarification of multiple uses in the White Area public land is that maintaining intact native grasslands will be a high priority.

Importance of watershed protection continues.
Grasslands - White Area
Public Land

- Enhanced management of human footprint - **Linear Footprint Management Plan** to be developed by end of 2017, with initial focus on key areas of species at risk habitat and intact native grassland

- Work with ranching community and other stakeholders to explore opportunities for **further conservation management approaches**

- **Integrated approach to public land use requirements**, in (surface and sub-surface) to ensure clarity for the Alberta Energy Regulator, industry and the public
Minimize conversion of intact native grasslands

Draft plan provides clear guidelines to avoid sale of public lands in areas of intact native grasslands where no irrigation potential exists

Where irrigation potential exists, proposals will be considered, with preference to proposals that contain an appropriate exchange from private land (side bar page 89)
SSRP does not change private property rights

Explore regionally-appropriate conservation tools

Complete development and evaluation of a voluntary conservation offset pilot

Continue to develop and facilitate adoption of environmental Beneficial Management Practices

Consider intact native grasslands as the highest priority under the Land Trust Grant Program (side bar page 75)
Discussion

- Draft Plan pages 41 - 45, 66 – 75

- Do you support the approaches and proposed strategies in the Eastern Slopes – Green Area Public Land?
  - Are there areas of concern and why?
  - Is there anything missing?

- Do you support the approaches and proposed strategies in the Grasslands - White Area Public Land?
  - Are there areas of concern and why?
  - Is there anything missing?

- Do you support the approach for stewardship and conservation on private lands?
  - Are there areas of concern and why?
  - Is there anything missing?
Outcomes #3 and #4

- Draft Plan pages 45 - 48, 75 - 91
- Schedules A, Air Quality, pages 132 – 133, B, Surface Water Quality, pages 134 - 142
- Appendix B, pages 111 - 112
Managing Cumulative Effects

- **Cumulative Effects** – “The combined effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable land-use activities, over time, on the environment” (LUF Policy 2008)

- **Outcomes-based** – what do we want our region or place in the region to look like in the future from an environmental, economic and social perspective?

- **Place-based** – LUF regions, watersheds, airsheds

- **Performance-based** – are we getting what we want? Monitor for results, adjust if off track

- **Collaborative** – share our experiences to date, work together on solutions
  - An absolute necessity with ‘outcomes’ approach, especially if outcomes not being met
Environmental Management Frameworks

Indicators, Triggers, Limits, Targets
- Indicators are chosen (e.g. NO2, grasslands habitat)
- Triggers, limits or targets (outcomes) are set

Monitoring and Modeling
- Monitor and assess actual conditions relative to triggers and limits

Management Response and Reporting
- Exceeding triggers or limits requires a response
- Results reported
Alberta has endorsed the **National Air Quality Management System** as a comprehensive approach for improving air quality (side bar page 49).

Implementation of the system in Alberta requires the continued support and maintenance of **effective partnerships and collaborative approaches**.

Understanding and managing both point sources and non-point sources (side bars pages 25 and 48), using a combination of both **non-regulatory and regulatory tools**, will be important to achieving air quality objectives in this region.
Objective: Releases from various sources, point and non-point, are managed so that they do not collectively result in unacceptable air quality

- **Indicators**: nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), fine particulate matter (PM₂.₅) and ground-level ozone (ozone or O₃), side bar page 26

- **Range of tools** to be used in response to any trigger or limit exceedances;

- Non-point source contributions prominent
Advancing Watershed Management

- Matching **water supply and demand** is a key **challenge** in the region
- **Key existing water policies**, strategies and agreements in the region will be confirmed (e.g., the Approved Water Management Plan and transboundary agreements), side bar page 29
- Direction for **water management** in the region is being coordinated with the **water conversation**
Objective: Surface water quality in the Bow, Milk, Oldman, and South Saskatchewan rivers and their tributaries is managed so current and future water uses are protected

- **Indicators**: 15 general
- **Secondary indicators**: 4 pesticide and 2 metal
- **Range of regulatory and non-regulatory tools** to be used in response to any trigger or limit exceedances
- Non-point source contributions more prominent, side bar page 25
- Collaborative work on the **Bow River Phosphorous Management Plan**
Groundwater

- Groundwater quantity in some local areas is experiencing pressure
- A comprehensive approach for groundwater management which will include an enhanced regional monitoring strategy will be completed by the end of 2015
Wetlands and Riparian Areas

- Highly diverse and complex ecosystems that greatly contribute to human and ecosystem health
- Implementation of the Alberta Wetlands Policy will set regional objectives, side bar page 25
- Encourage municipalities to use Stepping Back from the Water for improved riparian management
- Continue working with landowners and stakeholders to increase knowledge and improve management of wetland areas and riparian areas
Efficient and Resilient Water Supply

Water Supply and Demand

- Managing a **limited water supply with increasing demand**
- Optimized **water management infrastructure** system
  - Building **on existing work** including Water Supply Study, SSRB Adaptation Project, Bow River Project
- Water sector **conservation, efficiency and productivity plans** supported
Adaptation - Climate Variability, Flooding & Drought

- Continue to develop approaches to address climate variability found in the region
- Plan and manage for droughts and floods
- Update flood hazard mapping, limit new development in flood hazard areas, and support municipal flood hazard mitigation plans, side bar page 59
- Ensure the region is resilient and can adapt to changing conditions over time
Improve headwaters management through:

- Establishment of conservation areas
- Continue collaboration with watershed planning and advisory councils (WPACs) on headwaters management initiatives
- Review existing water conservation objectives of tributaries in headwaters in support of the Approved Water Management Plan
Role of WPACs and Airshed Groups

- Continued collaboration with WPACs and local airshed zone organizations, with clarified roles in relation to regional plans
  - Focus on opportunities for these groups to contribute to achieving regional plan environmental outcomes and objectives

- New activities will focus on:
  - Support for development and implementation of new management frameworks and approaches
  - Support for other planning initiatives related to regional planning
Discussion

- Draft Plan pages 45 - 49, 75 - 91

- Do you support the proposed air quality management framework and strategies for managing air quality?
  - Are there areas of concern and why?
  - Is there anything missing?
  - Opportunities for enhancing collaboration?

- Do you support the proposed water quality management framework and strategies for advancing watershed management?
  - Are there areas of concern and why?
  - Is there anything missing?
Outcomes #5, #6 and #7

- Draft Plan pages 49 - 56, 91 - 101
- Appendix J, pages 130 - 131
Land-use planning is both a municipal and provincial activity

A high-level of collaboration, coordination and integration is important to achieving the regional outcomes for air, land, water and biodiversity
Strengthening Communities

- **Municipal decisions in the region should aim to:**
  - Make efficient use of land, infrastructure, public services and public facilities to establish land-use patterns that influence human activity, facilitate health and well-being, and promote social interaction and inclusion
  - Promote resource conservation
  - Protect, enhance and promote the historic and cultural integrity of an area
  - Enhance economic development activities
  - Minimize environmental impacts on land, air and water
  - Protect significant natural environments
  - Contribute to the development of healthy, safe and viable communities
  - Contribute to a safe, efficient and cost-effective provincial transportation network
Provincial Land-Use Policies

- Intent is to incorporate policies into the Implementation Plan to provide guidelines on expectations needed to build sustainable communities with cooperation and collaboration
- The language of the policies have been modernized and streamlined
- Side bar page 92
Municipalities will:

- Utilize or incorporate measures which minimize or mitigate flooding
- Incorporate measures to mitigate floods through flood hazard area management, emergency response, aligning to provincial policy on development within flood hazard areas

Encouraged to:

- Assess existing developments in flood hazard areas for long-term opportunities for redevelopment to reduce risks with flooding
To meet growing demands, the focus over the next few decades will be on managing existing recreational areas and access management. Additional camping opportunities will be developed and key recreational areas will be enhanced through facilities re-investment (Page 115)

- 8 provincial parks (expansions and new) in eastern slopes
- 1 provincial park expansion in White Area
- 3 provincial recreation areas in eastern slopes
- 9 public land recreation areas (ESRD)
Future access and camping management will be determined through trail mapping, and through recreation and access management planning and linear footprint management planning with consultation.

Priority areas are the area north of Castle, Livingstone, Porcupine Hills and Willow Creek (as described in the draft regional plan).

The Government of Alberta will work collaboratively with stakeholders and trail associations to determine the appropriate trail network.
Enhancing Cultural Opportunities

- In concert with developers, ensure that land-based development activities are assessed to identify and protect historic resources
- Ensure continued public accessibility to information regarding historic resources in the region
- Identify and designate important historic resources in the region with municipal partners
- Work with and support Parks Canada to inscribe Writing-on-Stone as a World Heritage site
Aboriginal peoples included in land-use planning

- In accordance with applicable government policy, the Government of Alberta will continue to consult with aboriginal peoples in a meaningful way when Government decisions may adversely affect the continued exercise of their constitutionally protected rights and the input from these consultations continues to be considered prior to the decision.

- Ongoing consultation, engagement and relationship building and establishing innovative outreach programs that are meaningful, relevant and sensitive to First Nation’s culture are important.
Aboriginal peoples included in land-use planning

- Expand scope of work with Treaty 7 First Nations under the structured engagement process to include SSRP implementation (side bar page 56)
- Collaborate with First Nations with an interest in the region on:
  - Development of mechanisms for engagement and strategic consultation
  - Fish and Wildlife management, access management and economic and business opportunities
  - Management of current and new conservation areas and public lands
  - Strategic direction and joint priorities
  - Linkages for environmental management frameworks and sub-tables (e.g. land, water, biodiversity, etc.)
Discussion

- Draft Plan pages 49 - 56, 91 - 101

- Do you support the proposed strategies for strengthening communities?
  - Are there areas of concern and why?
  - Is there anything missing?

- Do you support proposed strategies for enhancing recreation and cultural opportunities in the region?
  - Are there areas of concern and why?
  - Is there anything missing?

- Do you support proposed strategies for ensuring aboriginal peoples are included in land-use planning?
  - Are there areas of concern and why?
  - Is there anything missing?
Thank You

- For more information and to complete the workbook on-line:
  www.landuse.alberta.ca

- SSRP blog web site:
  aesrd.wordpress.com

- Submissions and workbooks due January 15, 2014