

Nigel Douglas

From: Alberta Wilderness Association [Alberta_Wilderness_Association@mail.vresp.com]
Sent: May-30-11 2:43 PM
To: awa.nd@shaw.ca
Subject: Wilderness & Wildlife Defenders - Lower Athabasca



Alberta Wilderness Association

May 30, 2011



Dear Nigel,

Public consultation is now underway for the first of seven regional land use plans in Alberta, so it's important to get this one right. This plan is for the Lower Athabasca region in northeastern Alberta, where most current tar sands development has occurred and will occur. The draft plan is still taking a hands-off approach to managing land-based impacts of this intensive development. Please add your voice to strengthen this plan.

- Carolyn Campbell, AWA Conservation Specialist

In This Issue:

Lower Athabasca
Public Consultation
Your Voice Needed!

AWA
www.AlbertaWilderness.ca
[1-866-313-0713](tel:1-866-313-0713)

Northeast Alberta should not be an Industrial Sacrifice Zone - Get the First Regional Land Use Plan Right!

Background

The Lower Athabasca region in northeast Alberta is the first to have a regional plan developed under the Land Use Framework. AWA supports the intention to have better cumulative effects management of all developments on landscapes across Alberta. This Integrated Regional Plan, now in draft form, is the first big test of how effective that might be.

So far, the draft plan is an improvement over the status quo, but falls far short of real cumulative effects management that would sustain the area's biodiversity. It is especially weak managing land-based impacts of development, and in no way balances economic development with the detrimental environmental and social effects of the oil sands.

The Issue

The draft plan is a step forward in:

- including energy development in cumulative effects planning;
- setting out regulations for how key environmental indicators will be monitored, and how some air and water limits and 'management action triggers' will be set; and
- establishing some new protected areas outside of where proven oil sands reserves are.

But it needs to be much stronger in these areas:

- a biodiversity plan and limits on the active bitumen extraction footprint should be included in the plan today – not delayed for another two years, or possibly

forever;

- protected areas should be 50%, not 20%, of the region and be more representative of threatened woodland caribou habitat and of southern ecosystems in the region;
- proposed conservation areas should be protected from industry; they should not include active commercial forestry leases and petroleum and natural gas leases; any active leases should be managed to reduce footprint and accelerate production and reclamation similar to the successful Hay-Zama Lakes Wildland Park model; and
- for water management, aquatic ecosystem health indicators, more water monitoring stations, and more bitumen extraction-related impacts should be included.

Take Action

Public consultation on the draft plan lasts until June 6, 2011. Now is the time to speak up for stronger environmental protection for this important region and in this important cumulative effects management effort.

A copy of AWA's letter to the Premier is posted here on our web site:
<http://albertawilderness.ca/issues/wildlands/land-conservation/public-lands/archive/2011-05-30-draft-lower-athabasca-integrated-regional-plan-awa-comments/view>

Please write your own letter to Premier Stelmach and copy in the Land Use Secretariat:

Hon. Ed Stelmach
Premier of Alberta
Room 307, Legislature Building
10800 – 97th Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6
E-mail: premier@gov.ab.ca

Land Use Secretariat
9th Floor, 10035 – 108 Street
Edmonton, AB T5J 3E1
Email: LUF@gov.ab.ca

Or you can fill out an online workbook available at:
<http://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabasca/Default.aspx>

And please send us a copy of any correspondence, to awa.cc@shaw.ca

Thanks for your continued dedication!

Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action

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