

for Canada adopted by the federal government, Alberta and other provinces, included goals such as “maintain and restore biodiversity,” clear wording that fulfilled the criteria established by the United Nations Environment Program and the International Union for Conservation of Nature for conservation strategies. It would be more auspicious if Alberta’s new policy re-affirmed the Alberta government’s prior commitment to a clear, world-class, biodiversity goal.

The crucial policy piece for shifting on-the-ground practices is the management system; from what we have learned, the architecture being developed for Alberta’s policy has great potential. Insights from Alberta’s Biodiversity Monitoring Institute, from provincial land-use plan modeling and more recently, from advances in habitat “cause and effect” analyses will be integrated. Planning tools will allow decision-makers and, hopefully, the public to see how key outcomes for habitats and species may be expected to vary with policy decisions. For example, expected outcomes for forest bird populations for northeastern Alberta can be compared under various management scenarios such as “business as usual,” best industrial operating practices, stronger motorized access management, and protected areas. Decision-makers could also look at how these policies would affect access to fossil fuel and forestry resources to identify tradeoff costs of limiting the industrial and recreational footprints. This would pave the way for much more transparent and deliberate decision-making around cumulative effects of development on wildlife.

The government apparently intends to consult with the public on the biodiversity strategy this autumn. Hopefully the “nuts and bolts,” which is to say, the proposed management system, will also be presented for public review at that time since it is key to understanding the strategy’s potential. AWA will continue to advocate for biodiversity goals and policies to be informed by conservation science and for upholding our longstanding international biodiversity commitments.

- Carolyn Campbell

Where is Alberta’s Biodiversity Strategy?

Although the first round of regional land-use planning is virtually complete for northeastern Alberta and well underway in the South Saskatchewan region, Albertans are still waiting for an accompanying biodiversity strategy to manage wildlife and wilderness impacts from cumulative development effects. However, AWA has learned that the Alberta government is moving towards releasing a biodiversity strategy and accompanying management system for public review.

From what we have learned, Alberta’s biodiversity strategy has been dubbed “Managing Alberta’s Natural Advantage,” or MANA for short. The strategy’s vision is anticipated to state that biodiversity will be conserved, sustainably used, and valued – all of which sounds ambiguous. By contrast, the 1990 Wildlife Policy