



Dear {FIRST_NAME|Wilderness Defender},

We learned late last week that sensitive rough fescue and mixed grasslands on the Milk River Ridge are being opened up to exploration activity in the Alberta Bakken oil play. At the same time, efforts to secure legal designation for these lands are being delayed until the Government of Alberta releases its South Saskatchewan Region Plan (SSRP).

We hope you will take a moment to consider the dilemma of a planning process that waits to designate conservation lands while allowing new developments in those areas that need protection.

AWA has written to Minister Hughes and you will find [a copy of our News Release](#) and [the letter](#) on our website. Your letters will help.

In This Issue:

Sensitive Milk River Ridge
Grasslands at Risk

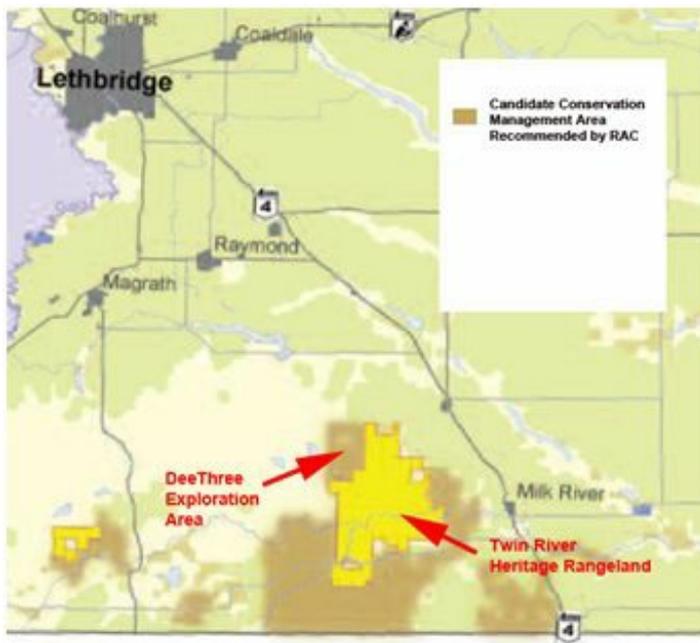
AWA

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Protected area targets have not been met in the Grassland Natural Region in Alberta which are far less than the global 12% recommended by the Brundtland Commission. Less than 1% of the Foothills Fescue and Mixedgrass Natural Subregions have any legal protective designation. The Northern Great Plains ecoregion has been identified as a global priority for conservation and protection as one of the World Wildlife Fund's Global 200 ecoregions. Temperate grasslands are the biome most at risk in the world. Birds that nest in temperate grasslands are the most rapidly declining group of birds in North America.

Large, relatively undisturbed blocks of native grassland are few in Alberta. Much of the native grassland is fragmented or degraded. Although native grasslands are only about five percent of Alberta's land base, they support approximately half of the rare ecological communities, 40% of rare vascular plant species and 70% of mammal, bird, reptile and amphibian species considered "at risk" or "may be at risk". The remaining large blocks of native grassland are extremely significant for biodiversity conservation and their protection is essential if we are to achieve protected area targets in Alberta.



Please send a copy of your letter to colson@abwild.ca as we will file your letter in the library at AWA.

Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action

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