

Alberta Wilderness Association Welcomes Bighorn Country

November 23, 2018



The Bighorn Trail in the Blackstone-Wapiabi. Photo © AWA Files

Today's [announcement](#) proposing Bighorn Country offers a significant opportunity for careful, well reasoned management for this world class wilderness area.

"Protection for the Bighorn Wildland and its watershed has been on AWA's agenda for 50 years. I've personally worked for it for that long. Now that designation is dangling before us, I feel overwhelming nostalgia. The Bighorn is a splendidly wild land, the last of Alberta's Rockies still as they always were. Alberta's best kept secret of nature is about to be both protected and unveiled," reflected Vivian Pharis, AWA Board of Directors.

"The natural and pristine resources of this region are priceless. From secure clean water, to vibrant healthy forests and wildlife that has room to roam Bighorn Country is long overdue. The maps released today look very much like the area proposed and shown on road maps in 1986," said Joanna Skrajny, AWA Conservation Specialist.

Bighorn Wildland Provincial Park, and Public Land Use Zones (PLUZ) on lands east of the park will help manage and enforce the impacts of land uses.

"For more than 50 years AWA has been part of the effort to conserve the Bighorn with everything from garbage cleanup, hiking and equestrian trail maintenance, to monitoring and research," added Skrajny. "The efforts of many have kept the Bighorn a treasure; this announcement recognizes these efforts and will help create a legacy everyone will be proud of."

The financial commitment recognizes Bighorn Country cannot become a reality without supporting local gateway communities, compatible wilderness recreation economies, and careful science based planning, management and enforcement.

The Bighorn Wildland is a large and intact wilderness nestled within the gap of Banff and Jasper National Park within the headwaters of the North Saskatchewan that retains its ecological integrity largely due to the absence of roads and industrialized access. Rivers and streams flowing out of the Bighorn provide up to 90% of the water supply for the city of Edmonton. The region holds great significance for Indigenous peoples, as well as current and future generations of Albertans who enjoy and understand the intrinsic value of pristine wilderness to our health and well-being.

AWA recently created a video on Bighorn Wildland available at this link:

<https://youtu.be/FnX9iKK71C0>

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Bighorn Wildland's spectacular wilderness. Photo © AWA Files



Dedicated to the conservation of wilderness and completion of a protected areas network, AWA inspires communities to care for Alberta's wild spaces through awareness and action.

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