



ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

"Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action"

June 29, 2022

Alberta Environment and Parks

By email: aep.outreach-services@gov.ab.ca

RE: Proposed Big Island Provincial Park

To Alberta Environment and Parks:

Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) appreciates the opportunity to engage and comment on the proposal for establishing Big Island Provincial Park. Founded in 1965, AWA strives to help Albertans understand the intrinsic values that wildlife and wilderness provide, and encourage communities to participate in conservation initiatives that will ensure a legacy for future generations. With over 7,000 members and supporters in Alberta and across Canada, AWA is dedicated to conserving Alberta's wilderness, and advocating for conservation strategies that protect our nation's biodiversity.

AWA supports the designation of Big Island as a Provincial Park. Considering the sensitivity of the river valley and the importance of the area to biodiversity, we are encouraged by the attention to conserving the ecosystem. We strongly agree with the vision, particularly the "focus on the conservation and protection of sensitive ecosystems", and we support the principles for park development of "shared responsibility" and "preservation, protection and conservation". We approve of the principle to "leave the land better than we found it", and welcome the restoration of degraded landscapes.

We strongly support collaborative management of the park. Given the Indigenous history of Big Island, we appreciate the involvement of the Enoch Cree Nation in park planning and management, and approve of the recognition for "the cultural and historic significance of Big Island" from both an Indigenous and settler perspective. We welcome the diversity of opinions included through the tri-government model, and support "education and knowledge sharing" as a principle use for the park.

We accept the proposed facility development, and appreciate the focus on existing footprints for infrastructure. We strongly agree with the prohibition of motorized vehicle use, and are pleased to note the alignment of park planning with regional and local frameworks, including Edmonton's "Ribbon of Green" river valley plan. We are encouraged by the Ecological Assessment that will be incorporated into park planning and management, although would like additional assurances that both the direct and cumulative impacts of developments will be carefully considered.

Overall, we agree with the proposal for Big Island Provincial Park. We would celebrate the protection of Big Island in the Parkland Natural Region of Alberta, and eagerly anticipate additional progress on designating Parkland areas, as the region remains severely under-represented in Alberta's protected areas network.

Thank you for considering these comments. We look forward to the establishment and management of Big Island as a Provincial Park.

Sincerely,

ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruiping Luo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ruiping Luo
Conservation Specialist