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[@AlbertaNWSAR](https://twitter.com/AlbertaNWSAR)
Alberta Northwest Species at Risk Committee



January 21, 2019

The Honourable Shannon Phillips
Minister of Environment and Parks
Minister Responsible for the Climate Change Office
Office of the Minister
Environment and Parks
208 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
T5K 2B6

RE: Request to Commence the Upper and Lower Peace Regional Planning Processes in 2019

Dear Minister Phillips:

Over a decade ago, the Government of Alberta developed and introduced the *Land-use Framework (2008)*, under the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act (2009)*. Under this initiative, the Government of Alberta made a commitment to develop and implement seven Regional Land-use Plans by the end of 2012; one for each major watershed across the province.

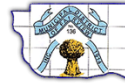
As of January 2019, only the Lower Athabasca and South Saskatchewan Regional Plans have been implemented, with the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan in its final stages of development. This leaves four other regions, including the Upper and Lower Peace, without a Regional Land-use Plan in place. Despite this, the Government of Alberta continues to alter and establish new permanent land-use designations within these regions, and these changes are creating several conflicts across regional land-user groups.

The Alberta Environment and Parks' 2016-17 Annual Report stated that the Lower Peace Regional Plan was delayed, and in the 2017-18 Annual Report there was no mention of the development of either the Upper or Lower Peace Regional Plans.





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Rather than delivering on Provincial commitments within the *Land-use Framework*, the Government of Alberta seems more focused on the delivery of both national and international goals. While NWSAR understands the importance of Caribou Range Planning and the importance of Wood Bison Recovery, we struggle to understand why the target of protecting 17% of terrestrial areas and inland waters is seemingly taking precedent over other management tools (i.e. regional land-use planning), which could be of more value for the Caribou and Wood Bison long-term recovery goals.

As you are aware; regional planning delivers a holistic land-use plan for “smart growth” with opportunities for economic diversification, improving quality of life, preserving cultural activities, protecting and enhancing the natural environment, and so much more. The regional planning process better lends itself to meaningful discussions and strategic compromises with balances between economics, conservation and social well-being. Therefore, NWSAR believes it is imperative that the Upper and Lower Peace Regional Plans begin within this fiscal year.

NWSAR requests that you prioritize the development of both the Upper and Lower Peace Regional Plans in 2019, starting with a comprehensive protected area gap analysis and a robust socio-economic assessment for these regions.

Our respective municipalities and communities welcome the opportunity to assist and support your government during the initiation stages of the regional planning processes for the Upper and Lower and Peace regions. Further, we look forward to the integral role local government and community members must play as part of the relevant Regional Advisory Council (RAC).

We hope you strongly consider this request, and we look forward to discussing this matter with you soon. Please do not hesitate to contact us for additional information.

Yours Sincerely,

Lisa Wardley
Chair, NWSAR Committee
Councillor, Mackenzie County

Crystal McAteer
Vice Chair, NWSAR Committee
Mayor, Town of High Level

CC: The Honourable Ricardo Miranda, Minister of Alberta Culture and Tourism





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The Honourable O'Neil Carlier, Minister of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

The Honourable Shaye Anderson, Minister of Alberta Municipal Affairs

Debbie Jabbour, MLA for Peace River

Rick Blackwood, Stewardship Commissioner Land-use Secretariat,
Alberta Environment and Parks

Al Kemmere, President, Rural Municipalities of Alberta

Barry Morishita, President, Alberta Urban Municipalities Association

Town of High Level Council

Town of Rainbow Lake Council

Mackenzie County Council

County of Northern Lights Council

Clear Hills County Council

Northern Sunrise County Council

Town of High Prairie Council

M.D of Fairview No.136 Council

County of Grande Prairie Council

M.D of Opportunity No.17 Council

Big Lakes County Council

