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Alberta Northwest Species at Risk Committee



February 3, 2020

Al Kemmere  
President  
Rural Municipalities of Alberta  
2510 Sparrow Drive  
Nisku, AB  
T9E 8N5

**RE: Rural Municipalities of Alberta Resolution 7–18F**

Dear Mr. Kemmere:

Alberta Northwest Species at Risk Committee (NWSAR) is following up with you on the intent of Resolution 7–18F, sponsored by Mackenzie County in Fall 2018. This resolution was developed by NWSAR and submitted by Mackenzie County, as one of NWSAR’s municipal members.

The intent and outcome of this resolution is critical in response to Federal and Provincial governments’ protected areas targets, which are increasing every few years. In 2015, the Federal government announced their objective to protect at least 17% of Canada’s terrestrial areas and inland waters, and 10% of Canada’s marine and coastal areas by 2020. In 2016, the former Alberta NDP government also made the same commitment, provincially for Alberta. In December 2019, Prime Minister Trudeau released “Minister Mandate Letters”, which include a new target for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, to protect at least 25% of Canada’s lands and waters by 2025.

At present, areas that qualify and are recognized as “protected areas” towards these targets include Federal and Provincial protected areas, and “Other Area-Based Effective Conservation Measures” (OECMs). For an area to be considered

as an OECM, it must fulfill certain criteria including permanency, and be approved after an assessment by Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP).

We recognize there are several inventory databases available for different types of protected or conserved areas; Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) has their “Alberta Discovery Guide”, Alberta Land Stewardship Centre has an inventory of privately owned conservation areas, Ducks Unlimited and the Nature Conservancy of Canada will each hold their own too. Yet, municipalities across Alberta do not have an existing inventory for our protected and conserved areas, which could contribute (depending on intent of protection) as OECMs to government targets.

AEP’s response to our resolution is encouraging, as they recognize the important role that smaller protected areas play in biodiversity conservation, and connectivity between ecosystems. Further, AEP stated that an inventory is an “excellent step” forward in understanding and recognizing the potential contributions that privately owned and municipal protected areas can provide to conservation in Alberta. For example, Municipal and Environmental Reserve can provide permanent protection including wildlife corridors, beneficial for biodiversity and ecosystem connectivity.

NWSAR believes RMA and AUMA are well positioned to achieve the intent of this resolution. We would like to suggest that the associations develop an inventory template, and send it to all association members to populate and return. NWSAR would like to see the intent of this resolution begin as soon as possible. We are happy to work with you on the template, and suggest that AEP be involved as this project moves forward.

Yours Sincerely,



Lisa Wardley  
Chair, NWSAR  
Councillor, Mackenzie County



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

- cc: Tom Burton, Director District 4 (Northern) – Rural Municipalities of Alberta
- Tasha Blumenthal, Director External Relations and Advocacy – Rural Municipalities of Alberta
- Barry Morishita, President – Alberta Urban Municipalities Association