

**RESOLUTION: -17F**

TITLE: Municipal and Privately-Owned Protected Areas Inventory

SPONSOR: Mackenzie County

PREAMBLE: In 2010, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity*, which included 20 global biodiversity goals, known as the *Aichi Targets*. All parties to the convention agreed to achieve these targets by 2020. In response to this, Canada adopted a suite of national targets known as the *2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada*. Canada and Alberta's co-led *Pathway to Canada Target 1* project focuses on the protection of 17% of terrestrial areas and inland waters, and 10% of coastal and marine areas, across Canada. Alberta Environment and Parks has also committed to achieving the protection of 17% of terrestrial areas and inland waters by 2020 in the province of Alberta.

WHEREAS: As of the end of 2016, the Government of Canada recognized that 10.5% of terrestrial areas and inland waters and 0.96% of coastal and marine areas are protected, through federally protected areas; and

WHEREAS: As of June 2018, Alberta Environment and Parks recognized that 12.54% of Alberta is protected, through 8.24% federally and 4.3% provincially protected areas; and

WHEREAS: The International Union for Conservation of Nature recommends that all privately-owned protected areas, that satisfy all international standards, should be recognized as protected areas by all levels of government; and

WHEREAS: The *Modernized Municipal Government Act* provides municipalities with land-use planning tools such as environmental reserves to permanently protect parcels of land from future development and to conserve natural features including: natural drainage courses; flood plains; waterbodies, and riparian areas; and

WHEREAS: Alberta Environment and Parks has yet to announce that municipal and privately-owned protected areas would be recognized in their assessment to achieve their target of 17% terrestrial areas and inland waters protection; Therefore be it

RESOLVED: That Rural Municipalities of Alberta urge the Government of Alberta to recognize municipal environmental reserves and privately-owned protected areas in their reporting towards Alberta's 17% protection of terrestrial areas and inland waters target; provided that they satisfy international standards for protected areas or Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs); Further be it

RESOLVED: That Rural Municipalities of Alberta partner with Alberta Urban Municipalities Association to compile an inventory of all municipal and privately-owned protected areas in Alberta for the purpose of providing Alberta Environment and Parks with a complete inventory of candidate protected areas and OECMs, to meet their 2020 17% terrestrial areas and inland waters protection target.

## Member Background:

Canada's 2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada was released in 2015. Canada and Alberta's co-led *Pathway to Canada Target 1* project, is based upon the Convention on Biological Diversity's *Aichi Target 11*.<sup>1</sup>

In 2017, the Governments of Canada and Alberta established a National Advisory Panel to advise governments on achieving Canada's international commitment to the Convention on Biological Diversity.<sup>2</sup>

Canada and Alberta's co-led *Pathway* project also established a National Steering Committee, an Indigenous Circle of Experts and a Local Government Advisory Group, who make up the *Pathway* Team.<sup>3</sup> However, the Local Government Advisory Group is yet to be formalized.<sup>4</sup>

In 2016, Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) committed to achieving the protection of 17% of terrestrial areas and inland waters by 2020, in the province of Alberta.

AEP's 2016-17 annual report recognized the potential for privately-owned and municipal protected areas to qualify for reporting towards AEP's 17% target and outlined how Alberta will identify these areas if they meet international standards for protected areas or Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs), pending international OECMs guideline development.<sup>5</sup>

In January 2018, the International Union for Conservation of Nature released *Guidelines for Recognizing and Reporting Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures*. These guidelines recognize that municipal and privately-owned protected areas can provide OECMs benefits, which can meet international reporting standards. The guidelines also provided a process that would be used to evaluate and identify candidate protected areas and OECMs.<sup>6</sup> AEP's 2017-18 annual report does not mention identifying other areas, including municipal and privately-owned protected areas or OECMs in their reporting, towards their 17% target.<sup>7</sup>

Although the intention of environmental reserves, under the *Modernized Municipal Government Act* (2018), is to prevent development of lands which would present a significant risk of personal injury or property damage, avoidance of natural drainage features and pollution prevention in wetlands and other waterbodies, many municipalities create environmental reserves for other intentions including the preservation of environmentally significant lands. The co-benefits of

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://www.conservation2020canada.ca/the-pathway/>

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/federal-and-provincial-governments-create-national-advisory-panel-on-canadas-biodiversity-conservation-initiative-627230281.html>

<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://www.conservation2020canada.ca/the-pathway/>

<sup>4</sup> Source: <http://www.conservation2020canada.ca/who-we-are/>

<sup>5</sup> Source: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/40c2fab1-e757-49f1-b403-e42c0239158a/resource/b77f22fa-e83e-4b6b-bd8b-e74868ef9547/download/2016-17-aep-annual-report-20170623.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Source:

[https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/guidelines\\_for\\_recognising\\_and\\_reporting\\_oecms\\_-\\_january\\_2018.pdf](https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/guidelines_for_recognising_and_reporting_oecms_-_january_2018.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Source: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/40c2fab1-e757-49f1-b403-e42c0239158a/resource/d50a12fa-15b3-4471-a6be-6b41bc6361d1/download/aep-annual-report-2017-2018.pdf>

designating environmental reserves can include the protection of wildlife habitat and habitat connectivity, protected areas for biodiversity and safeguarding the hydrological functionality of wetlands and waterbodies.<sup>8</sup> These benefits could be considered as OECMs under international standards.

AEP is working to achieve their 17% target, through multiple initiatives including caribou range planning. AEP's *Draft Provincial Woodland Caribou Range Plan (2017)* provides the scope of Canada's and Alberta's co-led *Pathway*, and states that conservation areas designated as part of range planning may contribute to their 17% target.<sup>9</sup>

Through caribou range planning, AEP have proposed to permanently protect approximately 1.3 million hectares of land in Mackenzie County for the Bistcho, Yates and Caribou Mountains herds; these areas would qualify and report towards AEP's 17% target.<sup>10</sup> (1.3 million hectares equates to approximately 15.8% of Mackenzie County's geographic land-base).

AEP's *Business Plan 2018-21* affirms that municipal and privately-managed areas that may meet the definition of a protected area or an OECM, are currently excluded as data is incomplete. AEP estimates that municipal and privately-owned protected areas represent less than 0.25% of the 17% provincial target.<sup>11</sup>

Over the next two years, RMA member municipalities could see proposals for an increase in provincial protected spaces to achieve AEP's 17% target. Additional protected spaces have the ability to impact municipal service capacities and operating budgets.

A complete inventory of all municipal and privately-owned protected areas will help AEP to assess and include all areas which qualify in their reporting enabling the fulfillment of the 17% target. The inventory will enable municipalities to assess what effects and implications may be incurred, if lands within their municipal boundaries were included in the AEP target.

### **Other References:**

Government of Alberta (2018) *Modernized Municipal Government Act*, Available: [http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/2016ch24\\_unpr.pdf](http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/2016ch24_unpr.pdf)

Government of Canada (2018) *Canada's Protected Areas*, Available: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-indicators/protected-areas.html>

### **RMA Background:**

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<sup>8</sup> Source: <https://www.communityconserve.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Environmental-Reserve-in-Alberta-A-Discussion-Paper.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Source: <http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife-management/caribou-range-planning/documents/DRAFT-CaribouRangePlanAndAppendices-Dec2017.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Source: <http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife-management/caribou-range-planning/documents/DRAFT-CaribouRangePlanAndAppendices-Dec2017.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Source: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/503f5c97-1fc9-4d72-b1ab-f32eafd9dd7f/resource/492414c7-cc8d-4154-abff-bb81081f0644/download/environment-and-parks.pdf>