

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan Workbook Results



Government
of Alberta ■

Table of Contents

Overview.....	2
Background and Purpose.....	2
Methods.....	2
Quantitative Data.....	3
Qualitative Data.....	3
Presentation of Findings.....	4
Summary of Workbook Data.....	5
Section 1: Challenges to Developing the SSRP.....	5
Section 2: South Saskatchewan Region Economic Growth.....	12
Section 3: Balance Between Public Benefits and Private Property Rights.....	26
Section 4: Lands to be Conserved.....	36
Section 5: High Value Tourism and Recreation Lands.....	45
Section 6: Final Comments.....	67
Appendix I: Frequency Response Tables.....	71
Appendix II: Workbook Instrument.....	73



Overview

Background and Purpose

Alberta's Land-use Framework (LUF) sets out the new approach for managing public and private lands and natural resources to achieve Alberta's long-term economic, environmental and social goals. The purpose of the LUF is to manage growth and to sustain Alberta's growing economy, while balancing this with Albertans' social and environmental goals. One of the key strategies for improving land-use decision-making established in the LUF is the development of seven regional plans based on seven new regions. Each regional plan will address the current conditions in a region, and will anticipate and plan for relevant development-related activities, opportunities and challenges in that region over the long-term.

The LUF identified the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP) as an immediate priority. In May 2009, the Government of Alberta (GoA) appointed a Regional Advisory Council (RAC) for the South Saskatchewan Region (SSR). Through a terms of reference, the GoA asked the RAC to explore the relationship between conservation and development and provide advice on how tradeoffs may be reflected in the regional plan. The Alberta government's Land Use Secretariat (LUS) will oversee the development of each regional plan. It will provide policy analysis, research and administrative support to the RAC. A regional planning team, representing Alberta government ministries and agencies, will work under the leadership of the LUS to develop the regional plan for Cabinet approval. The government will also consider input on the draft regional plan through public, stakeholder and aboriginal consultations.

The first phase of the public/stakeholder SSRP consultation process involved two main components:

- public and stakeholder awareness and information sessions conducted in 16 locations across the region in late November and early December 2009; and
- the SSRP workbook.

The SSRP workbook was designed to gather public opinion on the questions posed in the SSRP terms of reference. The workbook instrument focused on five key areas, namely: priorities for the SSR, economic growth in the SSR, the balance between public benefits and private property rights; landscapes in the SSRP to be conserved, and high value tourism and recreation lands. The workbook questions were prepared by the LUS in conjunction with The Praxis Group™ and O2 Planning and Design.

Methods

The SSRP workbook was undertaken from early December 2009 through to mid-January 2010 as part of the first phase of the public and stakeholder consultation. Albertans were made aware of the SSRP workbook through five principal mechanisms: 1) GoA news release; 2) the public and

stakeholder awareness and information sessions held throughout the region in November/December 2009; 3) 4,000 direct emails, as well as two reminder emails, to individuals and organizations on the LUS contact list; 4) the Land-use Framework website; and 5) through GoA presentations and meetings with the public, stakeholders and Aboriginal peoples.

Workbooks were available in hardcopy format at the public and stakeholder awareness and information sessions and were mailed out to interested individuals upon request. In addition, the SSRP workbook and supporting materials were accessible online through the Land-use Framework website. Workbook participants could complete the workbook in hardcopy and mail or fax it in, or they could complete and submit the workbook online.

A total of 1,019 workbooks were completed. Of these, 952 were completed online, with 67 workbooks submitted in hardcopy. Of the hardcopies, 33 were received by conventional mail and 34 were submitted via fax.

Quantitative Data

Respondents could choose to fill in all the sections of the workbook or only those of interest to them. Questions asked respondents to either rate or rank a series of statements or to choose from a set of options. Results from these responses are presented as frequencies of response, where frequency refers to the number of times a particular response occurred. This is presented in either table or figure format. Appendix I provides a breakdown of the 'n' values for all response options.

Participation in the workbook was voluntary. As participants were not selected through a random process, the resultant self-selected respondent population can be considered representative of interested Albertans; however, it may not be representative of the entire Alberta population. As participants were anonymous, information about respondents cannot be verified. Data has not been weighted in the quantitative summary since the relationship of the sample to the population is unknown. The views expressed in the workbook may be those of individuals or special interest groups. The summary of data provided reflects the aggregate responses of those who participated.

Qualitative Data

The open-ended comment questions generated a large volume of qualitative data. When reviewing the qualitative summaries, it is essential to remember that these summaries represent a general indication of the impressions and preferences of workbook participants. The information provided through the responses to the open-ended questions is inherently subjective. The summary of each open-ended question uses qualitative language - few, some, many, most, all - as this data cannot effectively be represented numerically. These categories express the level of responses in relative terms given quantification of the data is limited beyond providing the key themes in order of frequency of mention. For each key theme the qualitative descriptors provide a general indication of the volume of similar responses provided by participants.



Although 1,019 individuals participated in the workbook, it is important to note that the number of individuals providing comments varied markedly for each question. For each open-ended question, the comments were consolidated and reviewed to identify the themes. Each qualitative summary is prefaced by a brief synopsis highlighting the key themes for that particular question. In each question, the themes are presented in descending order of frequency of mention; in this case, frequency refers to the number of times respondents identified a particular idea or theme. The themes are presented in bold font, for easy identification by the reader. A series of bulleted statements appears under each theme; these summarize the comments forwarded by the workbook participants offering a more detailed elaboration of respondents' perceptions.

Presentation of Findings

This summary report consists of three main sections: 1) the overview, including the background, purpose and methods used in compiling the workbook results for the SSRP workbook; 2) the summary of the workbook data; and 3) the appendices, including the frequency response tables for the relevant questions, and a copy of the workbook instrument.

The workbook results are presented by section reflecting the structure of the workbook. The quantitative component of the workbook is presented in a series of graphs. Each qualitative summary is prefaced by a brief synopsis highlighting the key themes for that particular question. In each question, the key themes are presented in descending order of frequency of mention.

Summary of the Workbook Data

Section 1: Challenges to Developing the SSRP

1a. Respondents were asked to offer their opinion regarding priorities for the SSRP by ranking, from highest to lowest priority, the seven statements provided.

In total, workbook participants cast 6,734 votes regarding their priorities for the SSRP. Just over 40 per cent of all votes cast were for the top three priorities: increased protection of surface water, increased protection of ground water and greater conservation of environmentally sensitive areas. The following figure shows the ranking of priorities for the SSRP from the priority receiving the most number of first, second and third place votes to the priority receiving the least first, second and third votes.

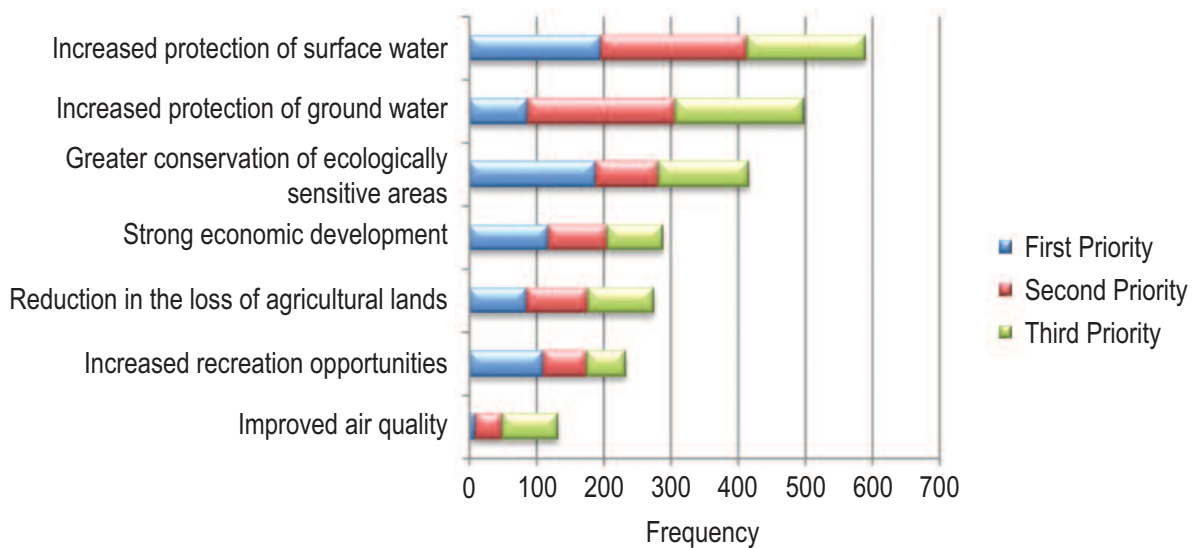


Figure 1: In your opinion, what should the priorities be for the SSRP?



1b. Respondents were also asked to provide written comments on the priorities for the SSRP.

Approximately one-quarter of respondents provided written comments on the priorities for the SSRP. Of these, the greatest proportion dealt with the topic of conservation, followed by protection of water resources, increased recreation opportunities and economic development (including growth management). Comparatively fewer comments related to agricultural lands, and to the workbook process itself. A few respondents commented on air quality.

The following section provides a summary of the key themes that emerged under each of the topic areas. Summaries are presented in order of frequency of mention.

Conservation

Respondents commented on a variety of conservation-related themes.

Conservation provides the foundation for all other priorities

- A number of respondents asserted that conservation of the region's natural resources underpins all the other priorities listed on the workbook. They said that making conservation the top priority would address protection of water, air, ecologically sensitive areas and agricultural lands, and provide a balanced and sustainable approach to economic development and to recreation; and
- Several contended that a healthy environment is ultimately the most important factor in citizens' health and quality of life.

Past emphasis on economic development has created an imbalance that needs to be addressed

- Several respondents said there has been too much focus on economic development at the expense of the environment. They called for a significant shift of emphasis to conservation;
- A few respondents suggested that the Alberta economy is strong enough to accommodate this shift; and
- Some concern was expressed that current economic conditions will create pressure to bolster the economy, resulting in accumulation of even more negative environmental impacts.

Diversify the economy away from resource extraction to environmentally sustainable activities

- Some respondents suggested that a paradigm shift is needed toward sustainable economic development with low impact on the environment; and
- A few respondents called for greater regulation of how industry is permitted to develop and use the landbase.

The term conservation means different things to different people

- The array of respondents' comments suggested that conservation evokes many different meanings and concepts;
- Some respondents emphasized resource management; others, protection of tracts of land and/or water; still others, sustainable land use; and
- Others noted the need for a definition of, and clear policy guidelines for, ecologically sensitive areas.

Preserve Alberta's natural heritage for the future

- Some respondents indicated the SSRP should address a long-term vision of sustainability to offset interests in short-term, but unsustainable economic gain.

Conservation efforts should have a sound basis and methods of evaluation

- Several respondents spoke to a need for a systematic, science-based approach to conservation.

The SSRP should specify and address specific landscapes of concern

- Some respondents expressed concern about specific landscapes in the region, including native prairie grasslands, wetlands and riparian zones; and
- Specific geographic areas of concern included, most commonly, the Eastern Slopes (a few individuals called for this area to be protected from development), as well as Suffield National Wildlife Area, Crowsnest Pass and the southeast corner of the region.

Individual comments and suggestions concerning conservation

- Since grazing leaseholders have a vested interest in protecting public lands, there is no need for the SSRP to facilitate additional conservation efforts on grazing leases;
- Support land trusts;
- Require, or provide incentives for, industry to contribute to a habitat compensation fund; use the fund to reclaim or restore wetlands;
- Develop a program for purchasing marginally productive agricultural land in the SSR and allow it to return to a natural state;
- Establish an ecological goods and services program for agriculture producers;
- Provide for a Métis settlement where Métis youth can care for a protected area; and
- Implement a program for controlling invasive species.



Water

Respondents' comments on the topic of water covered a range of themes.

Water is fundamental to the overall health of the SSR and the province of Alberta

- Many comments conveyed respondents' concern about the region's water resources, and the belief that diminishing water supply and quality is the most central issue facing the region and province today.

The SSRP should take a comprehensive approach to water management

- Several respondents suggested that a system-wide approach is needed to protect and manage the region's water resources, rather than strategies for individual aspects, such as surface water or ground water. A system-wide approach would begin with source water and include entire watersheds.

Revised legislation, regulations and effective enforcement are needed to manage the region's water resources

- A number of respondents asserted that government must implement new and more effective measures to manage the region's water supply and quality, and to enforce protective regulations; and
- One individual said government should consider a moratorium on irrigation of large tracts of land for ethanol production or for corn forage for large feedlots; another suggested water-use charges for all users.

Water management should be informed by high quality and reliable information

- A few respondents commented that there is a need for a better base of information upon which to base water management decisions and monitoring. Information needs include: a better understanding of ground water supply and issue, more comprehensive information on water quality (e.g., fecal contamination, pesticide load and other contaminants), and a quantitative evaluation or economic model to estimate the cost of watershed degradation to the region's economy and standard of living.

Individual comments and suggestions

- Contamination of groundwater from coal-bed methane gas operations is a concern;
- The SSRP should place greater emphasis on public education regarding water conservation; school children should be a prime target audience;
- Develop a watershed and/or groundwater stewardship process;

- Fund a program to encourage agriculture producers to upgrade their irrigation equipment to more water-wise models; and
- Use effluent from sewage treatment plans to irrigate non-food crops.

Recreation

Respondents also affirmed some strong views about recreational use of public lands, particularly off-highway vehicles (OHVs).

The SSRP needs to clearly address OHV use on public lands

- Several respondents suggested the SSRP should emphasize greater control and restriction over OHV use on public lands. However, some respondents (OHV users and non-users alike) argued that designated areas must be provided to accommodate OHV use and contain widespread environmental damage;
- There appeared to be some agreement that OHV use should be excluded from ecologically sensitive areas, but less agreement on how such areas should be defined. For example, a few respondents argued for OHV trail access in the Eastern Slopes but a few others suggested the area is too sensitive to accommodate OHV use;
- One respondent mentioned the Beaver Creek Forest Reserve as a concern;
- Several OHV advocates disparaged irresponsible OHV users who give the sport a bad reputation, and encouraged government to work with user groups to develop sustainable trail systems;
- Several respondents said that an important solution to irresponsible, damaging and/or illegal OHV activity is better enforcement, including harsher penalties; and
- A few respondents called for education to accompany enforcement of trail access and responsible use.

Overall, the SSRP should aim for sustainable management of recreation access and activities; however, people hold different views on what this means

- Some respondents supported increased recreation opportunities but had concerns about how this, and sustainable recreation use, will be defined and measured; and
- Other respondents favoured increased opportunities only for low-impact, non-motorized activities; for others, increased motorized access was a priority while others favoured a balance between the two.



Individual comments and suggestions

- Maintain access for recreational snowmobiling (the respondent argued that snowmobiles cause virtually no damage to the landscape in the winter time – clubs can help develop and maintain trails);
- The quality and services of provincial parks has declined – money should be redirected to repair and maintenance;
- Amalgamation of areas available for random camping means overcrowding at remaining locations;
- Planning for sustainable motorized access to public lands needs a strong communication and consultation process;
- Bow River Valley between Fish Creek Park and Carseland Dam should be turned into a provincial park; and
- Enforce laws of trespass on private lands.

Economic Development

A majority of the comments related to the economic development priority in Question 1A concerned impacts from urban sprawl.

Urban sprawl is having a negative impact on rural lands

- Respondents expressed concern about encroachment of urban development onto rural lands, primarily from Calgary but also from smaller cities in the region such as Lethbridge and Medicine Hat;
- Some respondents called for urban growth to be managed by mechanisms such as increased density and redevelopment of lands within existing city boundaries; and
- Several respondents noted loss of farmland to residential development as a specific concern. However, one respondent was open to development of agricultural acreages as a means to stem loss of population from rural areas.

The region needs an overall strategy for managing growth

- Several respondents articulated a need for a strategic approach and interventions to manage growth within a regional context.

A viable economy is a prerequisite for other priorities

- Several respondents expressed the view that the region needs a strong, viable economy in order to achieve other priorities.
- A few individuals suggested that the role the oil and gas industry plays in the province's economy needs to be acknowledged; others called for limitations to resource development in favour of more sustainable land uses.

Agriculture

Comments related to agriculture covered three main themes.

The region's agricultural lands need proactive and capable stewardship

- Some respondents spoke about the need for stewardship of agricultural land; and
- Several said that landowners are the natural and best stewards, while a few others suggested a need for government oversight of these lands.

Landowners and leaseholders should be free to make decisions about how they use their land

- Several respondents stated that government should not prescribe how a landowner may or may not use his or her land.

Agriculture is the mainstay of people's survival and the region's economy

- Some stakeholders saw agriculture as the fundamental priority for the region's basic survival and well-being.

Workbook Questions and Process

A few respondents commented on the workbook questions and process.

Concerns about the process of ranking between priorities

- A number of respondents expressed discomfort with the process of ranking or choosing between the priorities listed in question 1a;
- Additionally, some concern was expressed about how the results of the ranking would be interpreted; and
- Several respondents indicated they preferred a balanced, rather than a priority-based approach.

Improved Air Quality

Very few respondents offered comments on air quality. The comments were evenly split between two views:

- Air quality is not perceived as a great concern in the SSR overall; and
- Any concern is limited to the Calgary metropolitan area.

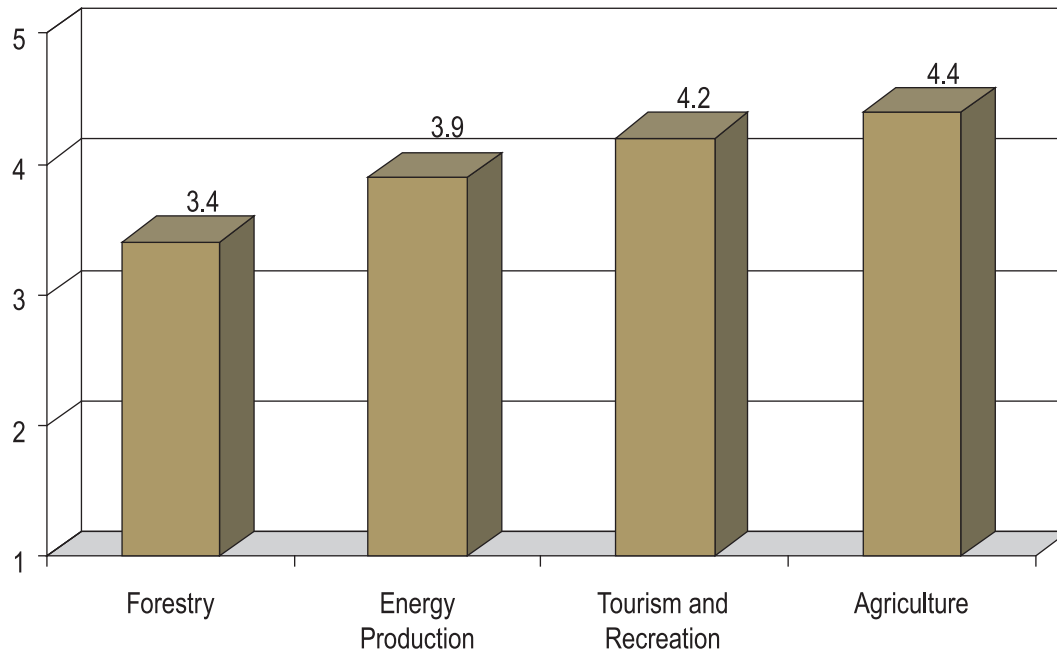


Section 2: South Saskatchewan Region Economic Growth

Figure 2 shows that agriculture received the highest average importance rating (4.4/5.0) and forestry the lowest importance rating (3.4/5.0).

2a. Workbook participants were asked to rate the importance of the region's major economic activities (agriculture, energy production, forestry, tourism and recreation) in relation to sustaining economic growth on a scale from not at all important to very important.

Figure 2: How important are the following sectors to sustaining economic growth in the SSR?



2b. Workbook respondents provided suggestions for ensuring the success of each of the major economic activities in the SSR region into the future.

The following section summarized the comments provided by workbook participants for each of the major economic activities. These summaries present the themes that emerged, and are organized in order of frequency of mention.

Agriculture

A total of 557 people provided comments for the agricultural sector. Water was the topic most frequently discussed in the workbooks. Concerns focused around access to water, efficient use of water, conservation of riparian areas and watersheds and efficient irrigation systems. The next important issues focused on sustainable agricultural practices, including: the reduction in pesticide use and pollution (and organic farming), preservation of native grass, soil preservation, and others. The fragmentation of agricultural land by the growth of rural residential homes and industrial developments was a concern shared by many respondents. Some people discussed the financial considerations in the agricultural sector, with many advocating fair market value for their products and government support through policies, access to markets and subsidies. Many respondents addressed the issue of industrial farming operations and feedlots, calling for support for smaller family farms. Some individuals suggested better agricultural regulations and policies.

Water conservation and water management

- Water was identified as a key issue in the SSR and was raised by many participants. The topics covered included access to water, a stable water supply, efficient use, conservation/preservation and the protection of riparian zones and watersheds;
- Respondents generally advocated for sound water management practices;
- Some participants addressed irrigation, recommending a reduction in irrigation, continued access to irrigation and the planting of drought resistance crops to decrease water demands. A few individuals indicated that no irrigation should be allowed;
- Free market in water rights to support conservation was mentioned by a few people;
- A few suggested keeping the first in time, first in right practice, while others suggested eliminating it; and
- One individual supported the building of the Meridian Dam.

Sustainable agricultural practices

- Sustainable agricultural practices emerged as a key theme for many respondents; and
- Numerous topics fall under the umbrella of agricultural sustainability, including: sustainable agricultural practices; reduction in pesticide use and pollution (and organic farming),



preservation of native grass, improved technology (including research and development), soil conservation, crop diversification/biodiversity, reduction of carbon emissions/carbon capture, protection of natural areas, conservation easements and protection of grazing lands/leases.

Reduce fragmentation of agricultural land and maintain a stable land base

- Many respondents stated that agricultural lands need to be preserved. The pressures from urban development, industry and oil and gas developments are leading to increased fragmentation of land;
- Overall, there was concern about the amount of commercial, residential and industrial developments on good agricultural land;
- Some participants identified the need to conserve and preserve parcels of agricultural land; and
- A few specifically stated that the right to farm needs to be protected, and that farming has to be valued.

Financial considerations related to agriculture

- Some respondents raised various financial considerations, which touched on a wide variety of themes;
- A few individuals stated that the province needs to support fair market prices and higher prices for agricultural goods;
- Others suggested that incentives and/or compensation be provided to farmers for good land stewardship;
- A few suggested that the government provide subsidies to farmers and assistance in the market place. Some thought that policies such as the right to farm and a sustainable food procurement policy should be implemented;
- According to a few, young people should be encouraged to continue farming, and incentives should be provided for them to do so;
- A few suggested that the value of ecological goods and services needs to be recognized;
- Others mentioned that there is a need to create local jobs, and not to rely on cheap migrant labour. Creating a stable economy was mentioned;
- Unlike the fair market proponents, a few respondents stated that farming should be run like a business, without any subsidies or protection. Farmers should pay for water, sewage, etc. Agriculture should be governed by free market forces. Global trade was encouraged by a few; and
- A few mentioned that agriculture needs to be diversified, with a value-added process.

Reduce the size of large farms and feed lots

- A few respondents identified the need to encourage and support small-scale farming. They want to see a movement away from large, single commodity monoculture-based farming to family sized diversified farms; and
- A few stated that there needs to be a shift away from intensive livestock operations to ranching. They suggested focusing on grass-fed operations as opposed to feedlots.

Agricultural policies and regulations

- A few respondents identified the need for better regulations and policies; and
- Others thought that fewer regulations are better.

Other comments

Other comments regarding agriculture forwarded with less frequency included:

- Support wind energy, which is compatible with agricultural activities;
- Support links with tourism and recreational industries;
- Monitor climate change;
- Improve and maintain infrastructure (e.g., roads);
- Support farming communities;
- Do not grow cash crops for bio-fuel;
- Grow cash crops for bio-fuel;
- Protect private property;
- Work together with Saskatchewan;
- Utilize genetically modified crops;
- Educate the public about agricultural industry; and
- Establish utility and pipeline corridors.

Oil and Gas

A total of 526 people provided their opinions and recommendations about the oil and gas sector. The most frequently mentioned topics focused on sustainable practices, coupled with alternative, green energy production. Wind and solar power emerged as the two most highly recommended alternative energy sources. Another key issue raised by many respondents was environmental protection and conservation, with water issues emerging as the key focus, followed by air quality, CO2 emissions, soil conservation and biodiversity. Reclamation and remediation of contaminated sites was a concern raised by some respondents. Various recommendations and differing opinions



were voiced regarding financial considerations in the oil and gas sector, with a fair royalty regime surfacing as the primary theme. Suggestions about regulations also varied, with more stringent environmental regulations, monitoring and best practices emerging as the most common themes concerning governance. Improved communications with stakeholders was also identified as an issue. Concerns about coal bed methane were voiced by a few stakeholders.

Sustainable, alternative energy

- Support for sustainable energy practices and alternative energy sources was the most important theme raised by the majority of respondents; and
- Many respondents recommended that the environmental footprint of the oil and gas industry be minimized, with the use of less invasive extraction techniques.

Alternative energy sources

- Many respondents support the development of alternative energy in the SSR;
- Of these, the majority recommended support for the development of wind energy, followed by solar;
- A few recommended other alternative energy sources, including hydro, water turbines, biofuels, nuclear and ethanol;
- Some respondents did not support the development of wind farms because of their impacts on agricultural land and viewscapes;
- A few individuals said no to nuclear power; and
- It was mentioned that Albertans need to drive more fuel-efficient cars and heat their homes more efficiently.

Environmental protection and conservation

- Improved environmental protection and conservation was supported by many respondents;
- The protection and conservation of surface and sub-surface water supplies was identified as the key issue by some respondents, with a few stating that the oil and gas industry needs to develop techniques to use water more efficiently;
- Reducing the industry's carbon footprint was identified as an important issue by a few;
- Air quality, soil conservation and biodiversity issues were raised by a few respondents; and
- A few respondents called for the protection of natural areas in the Eastern Slopes and Waiparous areas.

Reclamation and remediation

- Some respondents called for better reclamation of contaminated sites and abandoned wells; and
- They also called for better enforcement of the regulations around the reclamation process.

Financial considerations of the oil and gas industry

- Comments concerning financial considerations covered a variety of topics;
- The topic most frequently raised by a few respondents was about royalties, with the majority asking for more clarification regarding royalty rates;
- A few called for less government restrictions on oil and gas development; and
- Other considerations raised by a few respondents about the oil and gas industry included: concern that industry profits trump environmental conservation, generation of jobs and income, economic stability and growth, control of the boom/busts cycles, increased diversification and value-added products, higher oil and gas prices, free market forces and competitive prices and incentives.

Regulations and management

- As in the financial section, comments concerning regulations and management covered a broad variety of topics, with stricter regulations, higher environmental standards and best management practices emerging as the key recommendations made by some respondents;
- Better integration and the need to address problems with other sectors were suggested by a few; the sectors included agriculture, tourism and recreation, forestry and fisheries; and
- A few respondents identified the following issues: better enforcement; more monitoring; accountable and transparent Energy Resources Conservation Board; improved health and safety; balance between economic, environmental and social considerations; cumulative effects management; and clear zoning rules.

Stakeholder engagement

- A few respondents called for improved communications and education about energy with the public and landowners;
- A few recommended more coordinated efforts with landowners, and suggested that the energy industry work closely with all stakeholders; and
- A few called for better compensation for landowners and improved treatment of landowners.



Coalbed methane

- Coalbed methane extraction was mentioned by a few of the respondents, with the majority calling for stricter regulations or a stop to coalbed methane exploration.

Other Comments

Other comments regarding the oil and gas industry forwarded with less frequency included:

- Oil and gas industry is a good steward of the land;
- Oil and gas is in decline in the SSR;
- Cancer concerns associated with the oil and gas facilities;
- Utility corridors should be established;
- Power lines should be buried; and
- Oil and gas industry conflicts with fisheries.

Forestry

A total of 487 people provided comments about the forestry sector. The issues forwarded most often focused on sustainable forestry and logging practices, with the majority of respondents raising both of these topics. Sustainable forestry practices included balanced harvest with reforestation, best practice silviculture, better reclamation, controlled burns, ecological protection and the preservation of old growth forests. Under the topic of logging, most respondents advocated a reduction or end to clear cut logging and the implementation of selective logging. Another key issue raised by many respondents was the protection and conservation of watershed and riparian areas. The mountain pine beetle infestation was also raised as a problem that needs to be addressed. Some respondents stated the need for a stable regulatory system and improved stewardship. Various recommendations and differing opinions were voiced concerning financial considerations in the forestry sector.

It should be noted that these issues are interconnected. All fall under the umbrella of sustainability. For example, better logging, the protection of water quality, the reduction of mountain pine beetle infestations, sustainable management practices and financial considerations (e.g., income generation) are all sustainable practices, but these topics are discussed separately because they emerged as frequent themes. This overlap will be evident in the quotes that are provided.

Sustainable forestry practices

- Sustainable forestry emerged as the most important theme raised by the majority of respondents;
- Respondents suggested that a better balance between harvesting and reforestation be established, with a few suggesting that two trees be planted for every one tree that is harvested;

- Some advocated silviculture based on best practices in the forest industry;
- A few stated that better reclamation is needed;
- Others stated that prescribed and/or controlled burns are important for a healthy forest;
- Ecological protection was raised by a few, and included the preservation of biodiversity, wildlife habitats, wildlife corridors, soils and air quality; and
- A few mentioned that old growth forests need to be preserved.

Better logging practices

- Many respondents advocated for better logging practices;
- Of these, the majority recommended selective logging instead of clear cuts;
- A few recommended tree farms, smaller cut blocks, smaller companies and community logging; and
- A few respondents stated that no logging should take place in the area.

Water conservation

- The protection and conservation of watersheds and riparian areas was advocated by some respondents; and
- A few mentioned that sustainable forestry contributes to the protection of water sources.

Mountain pine beetle infestations

- Some respondents mentioned that Alberta needs to control the mountain pine beetle infestation; and
- A few stated that there is nothing to be done about the mountain pine beetles, and that the forest industry should harvest infested wood.

Forestry management

- A few respondents stated the need for a stable regulatory system and improved land stewardship;
- Better management was recommended, which included implementation of integrated land management practices, using Spray Lakes Forest Production as a model and good land-use planning; and
- A few recommended a stronger legislative framework and enforcement.



Financial considerations related to forestry

- Comments concerning financial considerations covered a variety of topics;
- A comment made by some respondents was that forestry is not a big economic player in the SSR;
- A few mentioned that forestry should be minimized or phased out because of its negative impact on the tourism industry; and
- A few individuals mentioned: removal of trade barriers; tax breaks for tree farms; increased stumpage fees; fair royalty rates; greater Canadian ownership; ecological goods and services; limited regional barriers; increased diversification of products; greater access to markets; increased exports; and increased jobs.

Other Comments

Less frequent comments related to the forestry industry included:

- Utilize forestry access roads for recreation;
- Pay attention to climate change and carbon sinks; and
- Increase funding for research and development, and education.

Tourism and Recreation

A total of 532 people provided detailed comments about tourism and recreation in the SSR. The issue raised most frequently was the protection and conservation of natural areas. OHV use was the second most important issue, with the majority calling for more regulations to control motorized activities. A few people thought that OHV use should be banned altogether. Another important theme was the promotion of tourism and recreational activities. This included the promotion of eco-tourism and sustainable recreational activities through education and advertising. Some respondents raised the issue of continued and/or increased access to Crown land and leased land for motorized vehicle use and other activities. In contrast, some wanted to see less access for OHVs. Fishing, boating and camping were also commented on in regard to access, with a few recommending low impact access to rivers, lakes and streams (by foot or drift boat). Greater enforcement of regulations with increased fines was another topic. With regard to the financial aspects of tourism, a few respondents mentioned that it is an important industry because it generates high revenues and jobs. Others would like to see funds available for not-for-profit groups.

Protect and conserve natural areas

- The protection and conservation of natural areas was the issue respondents raised most frequently. Many respondents indicated the need to maintain and preserve the natural landscape to protect wildlife;
- Some individuals proposed that all future planning and development take into consideration the capacity of the area to absorb recreational activities, while maintaining conservation. Others mentioned that the recreational use must be matched with the ecological sensitivity of the ecosystem. For example, some areas should only be open to low impact activities, such as hiking;
- Some individuals advocated the development of sustainable eco-tourism;
- A few individuals supported the establishment of more parks and protected areas;
- A few individuals mentioned the need to protect and properly manage the watershed and riparian areas; and
- Viewscapes were identified as an important consideration by a few.

OHV access and regulation

- Some respondents advocated that OHV use be regulated and limited;
- Others mentioned that separate areas for motorized vehicle use need to be clearly identified to preserve natural areas;
- Some wanted sustainable trails and better networks, with one respondent suggesting that standards such as those created by the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council should be implemented;
- A few wanted clear guidelines and laws;
- A few indicated that OHV use is not going away, and more facilities and trails are needed; and
- A few wanted to ban OHV use altogether.

Marketing, promotion and public education

- Some respondents advocated the promotion of eco-tourism and sustainable activities. One individual suggested that “voluntourism” is a good idea;
- Others mentioned that tourism and recreation need better marketing and promotion, including the identification of local attractions and heritage sites;
- A few mentioned that adventure and international tourism should be promoted; and
- Respondents pointed out the need for more education about responsible use. For example, it was mentioned that people need to be educated about the impact of activities such as random camping and OHV use on watershed and land use.



Access to recreational activities

- A few respondents indicated that they want increased and improved access to private and Crown lands for motorized activities, including better trail systems;
- A few recommended improved accesses to Crown land for self-propelled and non-motorized use, and some suggested foot-only access to Crown land, lease land and watersheds;
- Increased access points along rivers and watershed was recommended for fishing and boating;
- Better and more camping sites were recommended by a few; and
- A few wanted to ban random camping, while others want to keep it.

Enforcement and fines

- A few respondents advocated more enforcement, larger fines and user fees for recreational activities, including OHV use and backcountry camping; and
- Others identified the need for increased funding for Park Rangers and Fish & Wildlife officers.

Financial considerations of tourism and recreation

- A few respondents mentioned the importance of tourism in regard to the large revenue associated with the industry. They were in favour of building a strong tourist and recreation industry to generate work and income; and
- Some mentioned that they would like to see funding available for not-for-profit groups, as well as the removal of liability risks for not-for-profit groups who create trails and infrastructure for public use.

Other Comments

Other comments regarding tourism and recreation made with less frequency were:

- Implement clearly defined management goals and objectives with carefully managed development;
- Put limits on hunting;
- Encourage hunting;
- Develop opportunities for the First Nations and Métis in tourism and recreation;
- Establish links between agriculture and ranching, and tourism and recreation;
- Efficient use of water to accommodate growth in recreation and tourism;
- End privatization of park facilities;
- Increase the number of cabins in the backcountry;

- Wind energy is compatible with tourism;
- Urban tourism offers significant growth potential; and
- Clear cutting is incompatible with tourism.

2c. Workbook participants were invited to identify emerging economic sectors that will be important to the region in the future.

Of the 265 workbook participants offering comment, nearly one-quarter mentioned the potential economic (and environmental) benefits of alternative energy development in the SSR. While a number of possible renewable energy initiatives surfaced, wind energy development was the focus of much of the discussion. Tourism and recreation, particularly eco-tourism development, were also seen to hold significant promise for the region. Other emerging economic sectors considered important included: water conservation, municipal and rural land development, knowledge and technology-based industry, sustainable agriculture, alternative transportation, arts and culture and mining.

The following section provides a summary overview of the emerging sectors that respondents discussed most frequently.

Green energy

- By a significant margin, respondents most frequently identified green, renewable energy as an emerging sector in the SSR that will increase in importance in the future;
- In this context, workbook participants generally supported the development of renewable energy sources (i.e., wind, solar, geothermal and bio-fuels) as an environmentally sustainable means of broadening Alberta's economic base;
- A few respondents specifically noted that wind development has the potential to bring substantial investment dollars to southern Alberta and to generate significant economic spin-offs in manufacturing, construction, heavy equipment and building sectors;
- A few called for clear wind energy policy from the GoA; some others indicated a need for strict municipal bylaws regarding location of turbines and setbacks from public roads; and
- A few participants raised concerns about the visual impacts of wind turbines; one suggested there should be a moratorium on wind farms in areas of natural beauty.

Recreation and tourism

- According to some workbook participants, growth in the recreation and tourism sectors will generate future economic development opportunities in the SSR;
- Many specifically cited the potential of eco-tourism and supported the development of low-impact, small-scale, environmentally sustainable tourism initiatives in the region;



- A few highlighted the opportunities presented by adventure tourism and agri-tourism;
- In a few cases, people expressed concern that access to public land will become restricted as demand for tourism and recreation opportunities in the region increases; and
- Some respondents encouraged the GoA to support established sporting events (e.g., motorsports) with proven return on investment.

Water conservation

- In a few cases, respondents suggested that the conservation of water would be an emerging economic sector in the SSR; a few noted that water is the fundamental issue in the region; and
- Workbook participants identified a range of activities associated with water conservation that will become increasingly important in the future, such as: management, research, storage, allocation, recycling and surface water silting.

Municipal and rural land development

- A few participants indicated that demand for housing from a growing population will spark an increase in municipal and rural land development in the SSR;
- Some of these respondents believed that development should be encouraged because of the potential economic benefits to the region; and
- Others expressed concerns regarding the negative impacts of urban sprawl (e.g., fragmentation of agricultural land, environmental degradation). In this vein, a few people stressed the need to contain urban sprawl and to plan dense, sustainable cities and towns.

Knowledge and technology-based industry

- According to a few workbook respondents, the knowledge and technology-based sectors have significant economic development opportunities in the SSR. Health, biotech, energy and information technology were identified growth sectors for high-tech industry; and
- A few participants highlighted the importance of commercializing new technology and scientific research.

Sustainable agriculture

- Agricultural diversification with an emphasis on local food production was identified as a growing trend. In this context, some respondents backed the development of sustainable greenhouses; another suggested that protecting lands for small-scale farming for local food production would become increasingly important in the future; and
- A few participants were worried that corporate farming would overtake the agriculture industry in the future.

Alternative transportation

- A few workbook participants suggested that the development and provision of transportation alternatives to reduce reliance on the automobile would become increasingly important in the future; and
- In this context, respondents specifically referenced transportation corridors, increased public transportation options and regional commuter services.

Arts and culture

- A few workbook respondents identified arts and culture as an emerging sector in the SSR; and
- Most often, participants cited the economic development potential of the film industry.

Mining

- A few participants suggested that mining has the potential to be an emerging sector in the SSR; another few said that mining should be banned in the region.

Other emerging sectors

Other emerging sectors mentioned less frequently included:

- Education;
- Manufacturing;
- Aggregate extraction;
- Eco-business; and
- Forestry.

Other comments

In addition to identifying emerging sectors in the SSR, respondents discussed the following topics with some frequency:

Technology-driven amenity migration

- A few respondents predicted that technology-driven amenity migration would influence settlement patterns in the SSR in the future; and
- In this context, workbook participants suggested that with advances in technology, which allow individuals to work remotely from any location, there would be an out-migration from traditional urban work environments to rural locations offering lifestyle amenities.



Environmental conservation

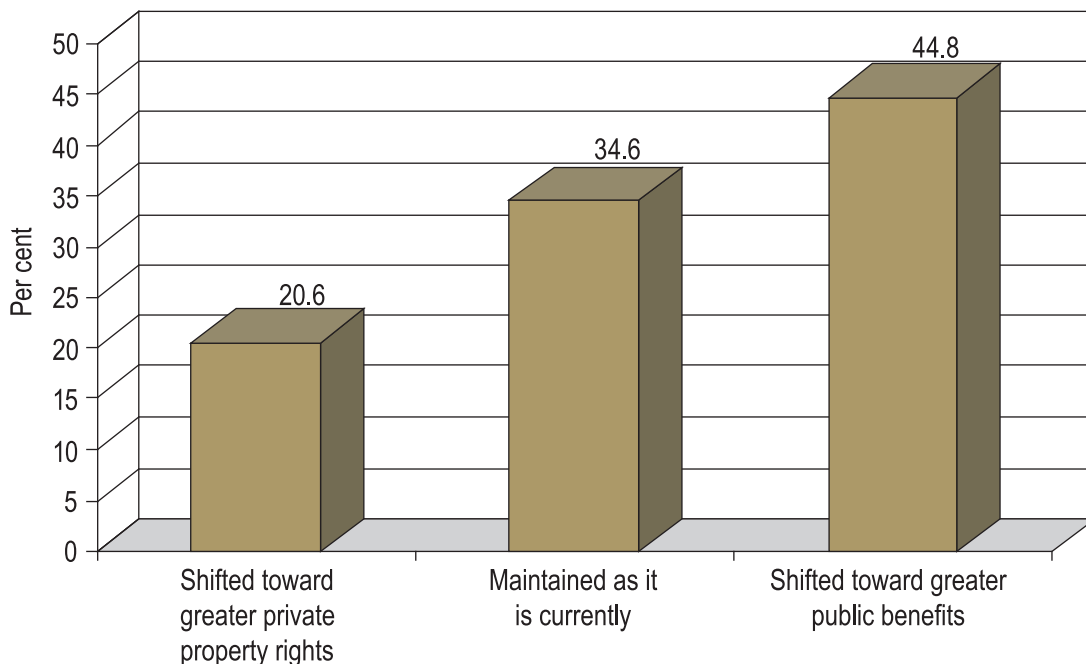
- A few workbook respondents underlined the importance of the environment and called for the conservation of biodiversity, natural areas, water, wildlife and clean air; and
- A few others mentioned the need to ensure that there is a balance between environmental conservation and economic development.

Section 3: Balance Between Public Benefits and Private Property Rights

3a. Respondents were asked to indicate which of the three statements most accurately reflects their opinion regarding the balance between public benefits and private property rights.

Shifting toward greater public benefits was the most popular response option, selected by 44.8 per cent of individuals responding to this question. Another 34.6 per cent favoured maintaining the current balance between public benefits and private property rights. Only 20.6 per cent of respondents believed the balance should be shifted toward greater private property rights.

Figure 3: In your opinion, should the balance between public benefits and private property rights be...



3b. Workbook respondents were invited to provide written comment regarding the balance between public benefits and private property rights.

Written responses were received from 346 workbook participants. The key themes that emerged from the workbook responses are presented by response option, in order of frequency of mention in the following section. The distribution of comments was: ...shifted toward greater public benefits (147); ...shifted toward greater private property rights (90); ...maintained as it currently is (89) and ...no response indicated (20).

A number of respondents indicated that the balance should shift to greater public benefits. These individuals believed that public benefits are key to the balance of sustainable societies, and that land-use decisions should reflect sustainable development strategies. They also said that there should be greater access to private land for public use, and that the land management over private and public lands needs to be improved, monitored and enforced. There was some difference of opinion as to who pays for the use and/or damage accrued on public and private lands (e.g., landowners versus the public purse).

Other respondents said that the balance should shift to greater private property rights. They felt that private property rights should be protected, as well as strengthened, enhanced and improved. These individuals believed that private landowners should have more control over decisions affecting their land, and should be compensated adequately for any loss in land value. They said that private landowners are the respectful and prudent stewards of Alberta's land, which in turn is a public benefit.

Among the respondents who indicated that the balance should be maintained as it is currently, some individuals identified the importance of balance as it relates to private property rights and privacy, fair and equitable policy and regulations, and the harmonization of various interest groups in development. They agreed that compensation and incentives should be awarded to landowners who are conserving key ecological areas, and/or experience a loss in value to their land. However, this question was unclear to a few people, who indicated that they needed more explanation and context to provide feedback.

The balance should be shifted toward greater public benefits

Provide greater access to public lands for public use

- Respondents emphasized that public land, including leased land, should be accessible for public use. It was noted that there should be greater access to lakes and rivers on public and leased lands; a few called for access for non-motorized and non-intensive uses;
- Some participants stated that leaseholders restrict public access and use by erecting fences, cutting off access to water shores and banks, posting no parking signs, preventing industrial and recreational development and putting up locked gates. Respondents thought that Crown land should be open for recreational purposes. According to a few of these individuals, the GoA should ensure that leaseholders are not restricting public access to public lands.



- There were a few comments suggesting that because of diminishing access to areas designated for public use, private ownership of lands should be reduced;
- A few respondents requested trail access on public and leased lands that is limited to non-motorized use, non-intensive use and foot access;
- Others claimed that environmental and special interest groups were unfairly influencing the access and use of public lands;
- A few expressed concern that greater property rights would limit public recreational opportunities; and
- A small few believed that access to environmental areas holds a spiritual component that should not be restricted to a few wealthy individuals.

Land-use decisions need to follow sustainable development principles

- In this vein, many comments stressed that land-use decisions need to be made from a broad and holistic view, which protects natural resources and ecosystems, enables sustainable development and viable communities and ensures a healthy economy;
- Others noted that current land-use decisions should be made responsibly, and should not negatively affect future generations. Respondents mentioned consequences of land development such as: unregulated sprawl, environmental degradation, sub-division of agricultural lands causing land fragmentation and country-residential development;
- The need for the government to take appropriate action for the conservation of sensitive and unique ecological areas was emphasized;
- Another few individuals emphasized that the public good should outweigh private landowner rights if ecological goods and services are threatened;
- In a few cases, respondents said that smart growth strategies should be pursued with regard to oil and gas development, population pressures, suburban sprawl and nodal development;
- Another few believed the cumulative ecosystem management approach should be considered;
- A few respondents noted that there will be inevitable trade-offs resulting from a regional plan, and that values need to be placed appropriately on the conservation of key environmental areas; and
- According to a few respondents, environmental practices such as soil retention, habitat improvements and water quality should not be compromised for economic reasons.

Improve land management on leased and private lands

- In some instances, workbook participants were concerned with leaseholder land management, suggesting that leaseholders should be more accountable for their practices. They mentioned issues such as overgrazing, weed control, soil erosion and water contamination;
- Others proposed that the government should become a better manager of leased lands. They believed that leaseholders activities (e.g., pollution, cultivation near riparian areas, cattle access and fecal pollution to waterways and intense farming practices) should be better monitored with regard to the impact on water, air, biodiversity and other land resources;
- A few respondents noted that private lands in close proximity to public lands and waterways require better environmental management;
- Another few said that landowners should not be able to subdivide their land to generate profits at the expense of the public good; and
- A few respondents stated that leases/licences should not be sold. They also thought that expired leases/licences should either revert back to the province, or be available for bid based on a five-year cycle.

Establish regulations, rules, guidelines and education to direct private and public land-use management

- There was a suggestion that Albertans require better education on land-use planning; this includes better awareness of Alberta's LUF. Additionally, a few individuals noted that private landowners should become more knowledgeable about public benefits;
- A few respondents indicated that the government should offer guidance on property management to private landowners to ensure sustainable land practices are followed;
- Others thought that regulations and coherent planning processes should be in place on private and public lands to prevent people from damaging the land and that stronger regulations should protect public lands;
- A few individuals suggested that rules should be designed around land-use decision-making processes that address the balance of uses and future development;
- Others articulated the need for strict rules around water treatment, riparian areas, and shoreline and flood protection;
- According to a few individuals, guidelines should be realistic and respect public benefits, along with private property rights. It was noted that private practices should align with public goals; and
- There was a suggestion that there should be a greater emphasis on the responsibilities of both public and private land users in relation to the damage or costs their activities may cause.



A shift to greater public benefits is key for a sustainable society

- Under this theme, some participants indicated that private property rights only benefits a few at the expense of many, and will be detrimental to sustainable societies;
- Respondents pointed out that public activities should harmonize a variety of uses (e.g., energy, public green spaces, trail systems, recreational opportunities, etc.) in order to ensure a healthy population and economy;
- A few individuals firmly indicated that a shift to greater public benefits is essential, as there are currently minimal public lands and benefits;
- Others noted that even though public benefits should be enhanced, industry activities should be developed at a smart and sustainable pace;
- Another few said that environmental and heritage values need to be incorporated into economic decisions and regulated for the common good; and
- According to a few individuals, ecosystem goods and services ensure the health and quality of life for current and future generations, and should be conserved for the common good.

Financial obligations and compensation

- In a few cases, individuals supported the requirement for the public to pay for public benefits that are currently provided by landowners. It was also stated that private landowners are linked to the financial obligations and maintenance of their land;
- Others proposed that revenue generated from public lands should be put into the public purse; they believed that royalty payments should not be distributed to the lessee of the land;
- A few workbook participants noted that fair and equitable compensation, as well as government incentives, should be awarded to private landowners that conserve their land for future generations. It was noted that the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* (ALSA) tools (e.g., transfer of development credits) would assist in cash flow and succession planning for landowners; and
- According to a few, private landowners should contribute a higher share to the area's tax base. It was also stated by a few respondents that taxpayers and First Nations must regain their rights and royalties.

The balance should be shifted toward greater private benefits

Property rights are a part of a democracy and must be maintained

- Here, respondents stressed that private property rights are the cornerstones of a democratic society, and therefore property rights must be entrenched and maintained;
- In a few instances, individuals suggested that without property rights, we are living in a communist state; and
- A few individuals believed that the balance should be shifted to greater property rights, as most Albertans are property holders.

Compensate landowners for loss, and provide incentives to conserve land

- Respondents articulated that private property owners should be compensated for losses in land values, land-use changes, instalment of pipelines or power lines, wildlife foraging, water, viewscapes or key features worth conserving on their land;
- A few firmly stated that the public should pay for public benefits. The public should not expect private land to be available for recreation, and the public needs to pay for their use of land;
- According to a few respondents, private property landowners should be compensated at market value. Others suggested compensation should be assessed at double market value or complemented with a small premium, due to the landowner's disruption in lifestyle and/or business;
- A few said that incentives should be provided to landowners for land conservation efforts. They cited the use of transfer credits to ensure fairness, and the promotion of existing ecological goods and service policy, which compensates landowners and increases public benefits; and
- A few respondents commented that the value of property is not regulated properly. In turn, the reduction in value of property creates land-use conflicts, which leads to unfair compensation.

Private landowners should have control over land-use decisions

- In this context, workbook participants said that private landowners should have priority, as well as the final say, in decision-making over their land. This includes the right to develop or not to develop their land;
- A few individuals opposed the assumption of public and government access to their land, suggesting that it is a private landowner's right to forbid access;
- Another group indicated that the government should not be allowed to take control of their private land for conservation purposes;
- Others said that private landowners should have a greater influence on land-use decisions in comparison to industry (e.g., oil and gas, electricity); and
- A few respondents noted that private landowners have been the stewards of their land for generations, and therefore are better equipped to make immediate and future decisions regarding their land.



Industry and government have a higher decision-making power on private lands than private landowners

- A few individuals indicated that landowners are lacking adequate property rights to protect themselves against industry and government decisions about their land. In their opinion, profits have been put at the forefront instead of the people on these lands;
- Respondents urged the government and industry to acknowledge and provide greater consideration to landowner property rights. It was noted that Canada's constitution lacks property rights, and the GoA could design policies to mitigate this; and
- According to a few respondents, public interests for development have influenced the decision-making process on private land. They thought that private landowners should have a greater voice over the development of power lines, pipelines, gas wells, highways or any other impact on their property.

Provincial legislation is eroding property rights

- A few respondents viewed provincial Bills 36 – *Alberta Land Stewardship Act*, Bill 50 – *Electric Statutes Amendment Act* (2009) and Bill 19 – *Land Assembly Project Areas Act* as significantly eroding and weakening private property rights. Individuals remarked that private property rights are undervalued, overridden and being infringed upon in the name of the public good; and
- According to a few respondents, ALSA is missing the recognition of property rights.

Private landowners are stewards of the land

- In this instance, respondents stated that landowners are the best stewards of the land, as they are careful, prudent and implement conservation practices;
- A few individuals noted that their land has been in their family for generations and it has been in their best interests to maintain and conserve the land;
- Others stressed that the public does not have the same level of obligation to conservation. They thought that the public is more likely to cause damage to the land, which is then the landowner's financial responsibility; and
- A few workbook participants indicated that public demand for access and recreational opportunities is putting pressure on the land (e.g., disrespecting wildlife and nature, impacts from quads and motor bikes). In contrast, they indicated that private landowners respect their land, and therefore should have their property rights protected, which would in turn be a public benefit at no cost to Albertans.

Enhance, protect and enforce private property rights

- Since private property rights are not covered in the personal property bill of rights in Alberta, a few respondents firmly believed their rights need to be enhanced, protected, improved, respected and become a critical priority. They noted that landowners have invested in their land, and their rights are being infringed upon by government acts, regulations and plans;
- A few individuals stated that adequate enforcement and regulations are not in place. Therefore, private landowners do not have the power to deal with the negative impacts on their land from public users. Impacts mentioned included littering, chasing cattle, damage from all terrain vehicle (ATV) use and unregulated trail use;
- According to a few respondents, there should be legislation to allow for lawsuits that address public trespassing and other nuisances; and
- Others indicated that urban rights are protected more than rural property rights. They thought that this needs to be adjusted, as the rural property rights are low in priority compared to public and industry interests.

Strike a balance between private and public use

- Even though some respondents indicated they would like to see a shift to greater property rights, a few stressed that there needs to be a balance between private property rights and public benefits; and
- Here, individuals noted that publicly leased lands should accommodate a variety of users (e.g., ranchers, energy, recreation, etc.) and that balance needs to be struck between the protection of public safety, public interests, private property rights and the protection of the environment for the public good.

The balance should be maintained as it is currently

Balance between private property and public benefits is the main goal

- These respondents generally agreed that the current balance between private property rights and public benefits should not change; and
- While a few acknowledged the current balance should be maintained, they forwarded a range of suggestions to encourage improvement, including: fostering greater respect and awareness, pursuing triple bottom line strategies, recognizing the value of public lands and pursuing smart growth opportunities.



Access to public lands and the assurance of landowner privacy

- A few respondents stated that access to waterways is essential for public use; others advocated for foot access onto Crown lands for passive recreation without seeking advance permission from landowners;
- A few individuals noted that it is difficult to determine who owns or controls a piece of land;
- Others noted that privacy and liability issues are important to private landowners, and adjacent public lands increase these problems. It was also pointed out that these lands are private property, and therefore landowners should have the right to control access onto their land; and
- Another few emphasized that public land, including leased land (e.g., grazing leases), should be accessible to the public.

Balancing policy, rights, regulations and enforcement

- Some of these respondents mentioned that existing regulations for public lands are not being adequately managed, policed or enforced. It was noted that current regulations and legislation should be enforced instead of creating new ones;
- A few individuals claimed that enforcement to protect private property owners is lacking;
- A few respondents advised that before developing new policy, an inventory should be conducted to identify the balance between public benefits and private property rights. It was also noted that policies should be flexible and change with the areas needs;
- According to a few respondents, new policies should not sterilize private property activities, such as the overuse of conservation easements; and
- In a few cases, individuals emphasized that landowners have been the stewards of the land, and have pursued conservation practices without government control. It was also noted that landowner property rights dictate that they are responsible for being stewards of their land; these property rights must be protected.

Adequate compensation, incentives and education are keys to achieving balance

- Under this theme, individuals indicated that landowners should receive compensation and increased incentives for conserving and/or restoring ecological goods and services (e.g., water quality, wildlife, habitat, riparian areas, viewscapes, recreational value and wetlands);
- According to a few, landowners should be compensated for public damage to their private lands. It was also expressed that urban communities should contribute and support their rural counterparts;
- A few others suggested that landowners need to become increasingly educated to improve their environmental land management practices;

- Others encouraged the use of incentives for conservation purposes (e.g., transfer of development credits, land trusts and rewards for not farming through sloughs) as an alternative to land development;
- Others said that a shift in greater public benefits should reflect compensation to landowners; and
- A few individuals stated that surface rights compensation from energy companies do not reflect the true economic value of the disturbance.

Balancing development projects with various interest groups

- Workbook respondents stressed that in some cases development results in conflicts and legal disputes between landowners (e.g., noise, light pollution, traffic and poor land-use practices). It was stated that not all development projects benefit the public good;
- A few respondents urged that respect should be encouraged between neighbouring rural landowners, as well as rural landowners and larger population centres (e.g., Calgary and Lethbridge);
- Others suggested that leases and licences granted from the government should not operate in perpetuity for the benefit of one lessee;
- According to a few respondents, landowner's rights to development should be recognized and accommodated; and
- It was mentioned that there is a basic interdependence among stakeholders to manage natural resources responsibly (e.g., water), as the action of one can affect others.

General thoughts around the balance between property rights and public benefits

- A few responses indicated that private property rights should be protected, and public lands should be available to all user groups. It was noted that flexibility should be applied to these decisions, as moving to either extreme would not be advised;
- Other individuals encouraged keeping in mind the common good, but with a balance for all interests;
- A few respondents stated that there needs to be a fair playing field between private property rights in the city and in rural communities. They said that public users do not always respect private and public lands. They asked for caution regarding the development of recreational opportunities that do not bring financial gains to the community; and
- Others highlighted that this question should also look at federal lands leased by the provincial government.



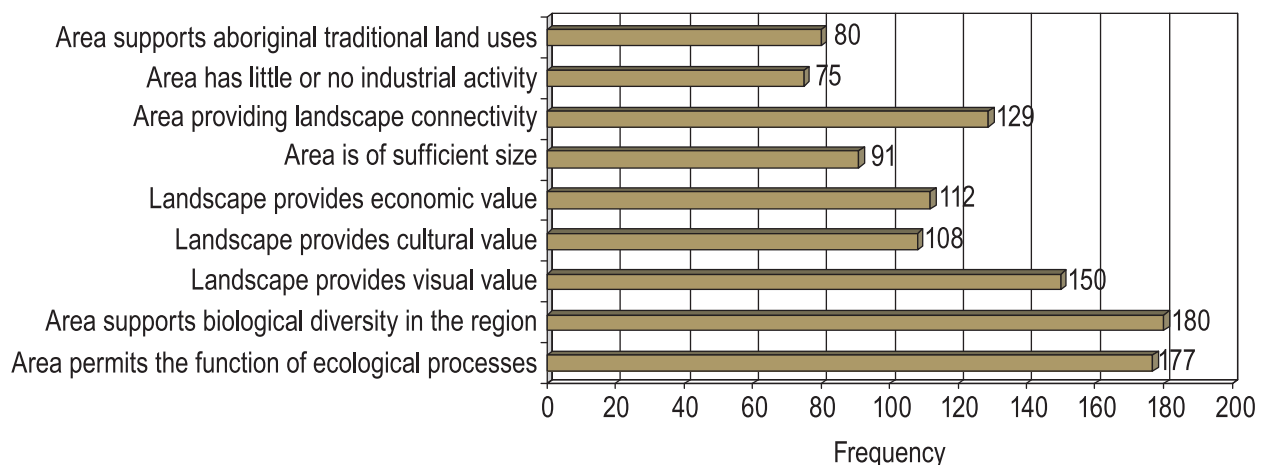
Section 4: Lands to be Conserved

4a. Workbook participants were asked to identify the three most important landscapes in the SSR that should be considered for conservation and to indicate, based on a list of criteria from the SSRP terms of reference, why each landscape should be conserved.

The 1202 suggestions for landscapes to be conserved were reviewed and organized by common grouping. Groupings were based on the common themes (e.g., water resources, locations, or features). Interpretation of the term “important landscape” varied and responses were very diverse, ranging from specific geographic locations (e.g., confluence of the Bow and Oldman rivers), to physical features (e.g., mountains, wetlands), to broader geographic areas (e.g., Parkland Natural Region and Kananaskis Country).

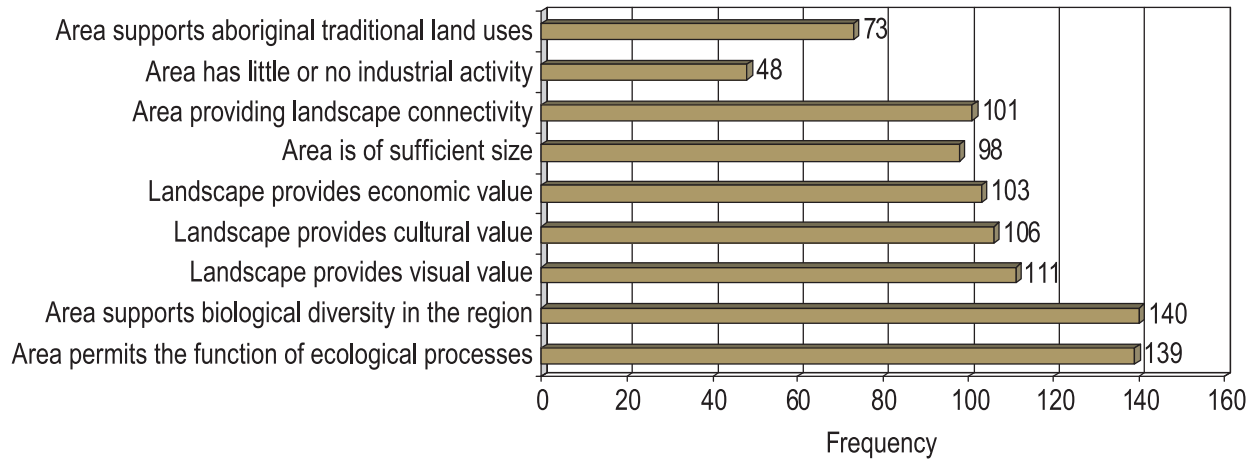
In the following section, the 15 landscapes identified most frequently (landscapes receiving more than 20 mentions) are presented in a series of graphs. Each graph details the frequency of response for each of the conservation criteria. The graphs appear in order of frequency of mention. This is followed by a list of landscapes which received more than three or four but less than 20 mentions; these are also presented in order of frequency of mention. Where appropriate, examples of the types of responses included under the thematic category have been provided. Finally, it is worth noting that the first four important landscapes (water resources and riparian areas, native grasslands, Eastern Slopes and the Foothills Natural Region) collectively constituted nearly half of all responses.

Figure 4: Water Resources and Riparian Areas*



* Examples of responses included in this grouping include: water, watersheds, river valleys, river corridors, headwaters, river banks, riparian areas, riparian zones, riverbanks wetlands, river courses and waterways.

Figure 5: Native Grasslands*



* Examples of responses included in this grouping include: native prairie grassland, prairie, natural grasslands and native fescue grassland.

Figure 6: Eastern Slopes

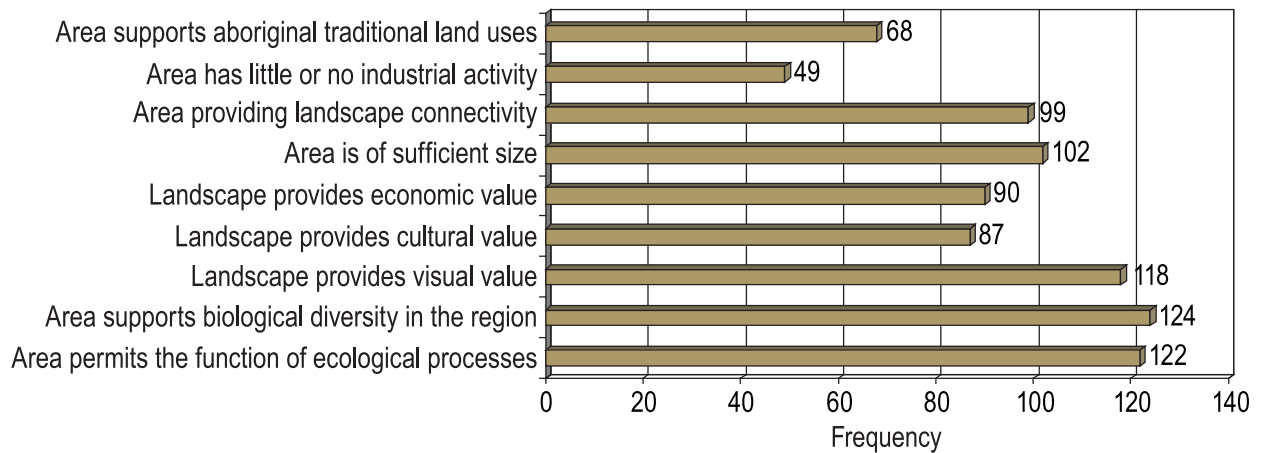
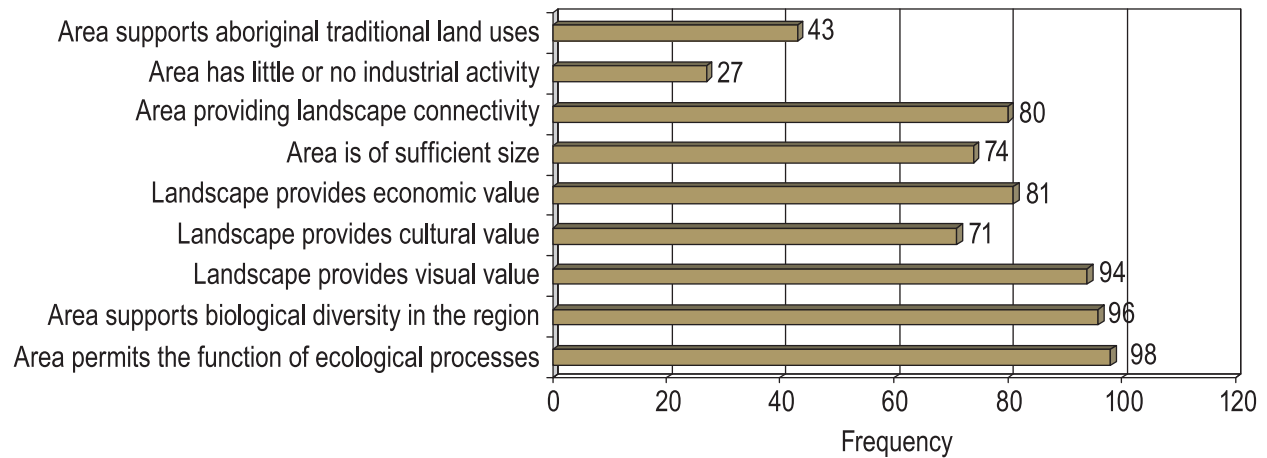


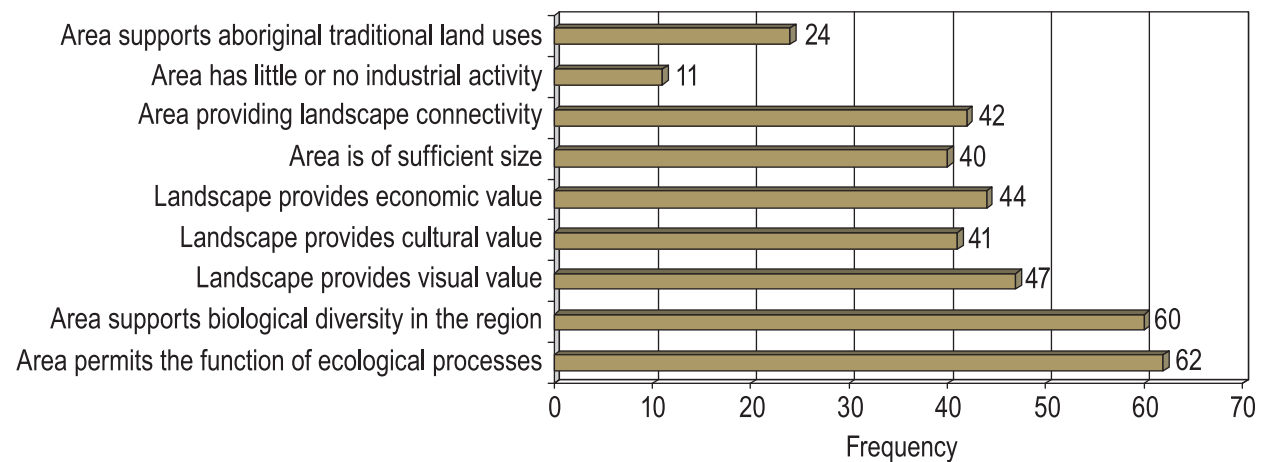


Figure 7: Foothills Region*



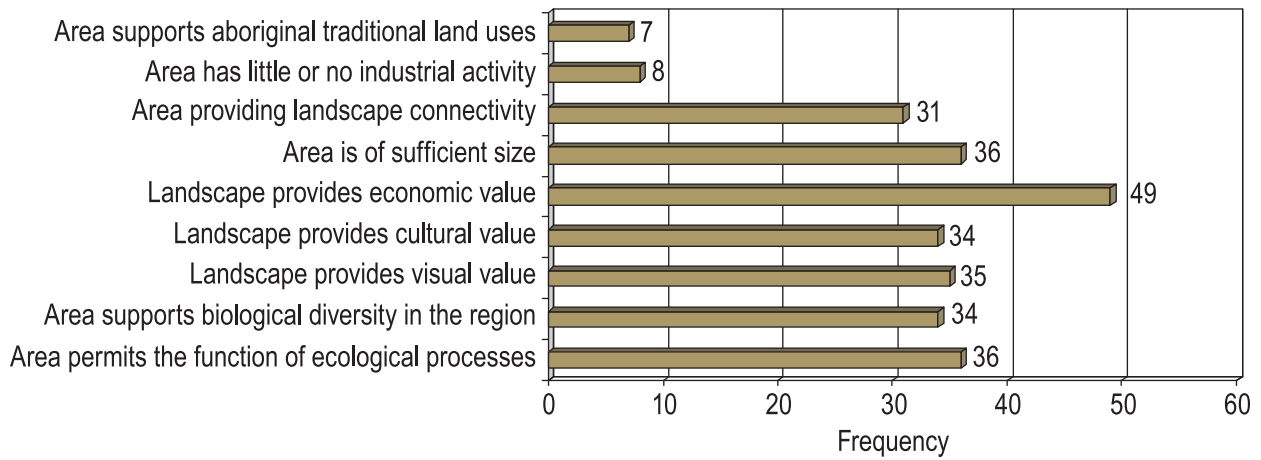
* Examples of responses included in this grouping include: foothills, Foothills Region and Foothills Natural Region.

Figure 8: Grassland Region*



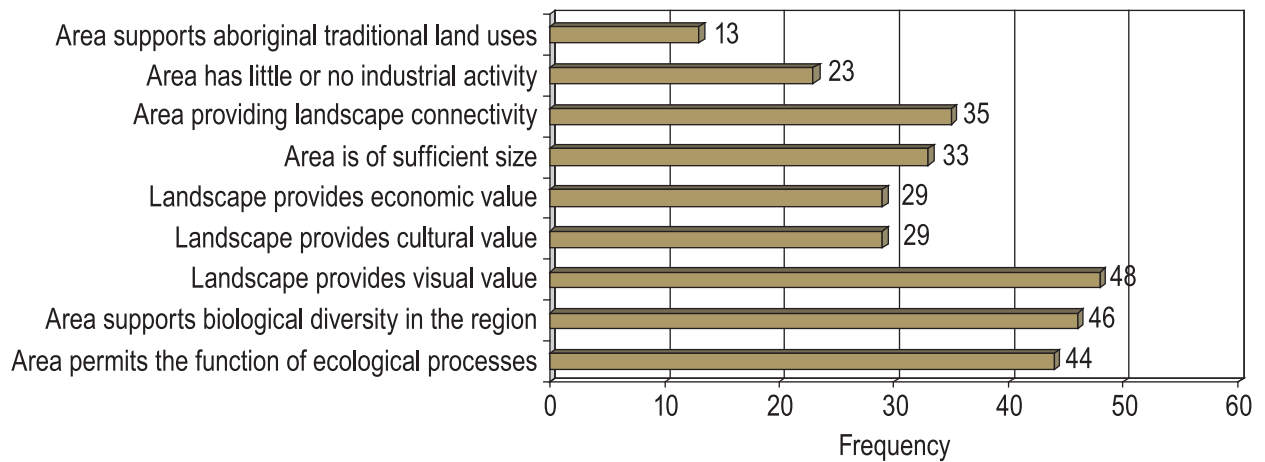
* Examples of responses included in this grouping include: grasslands and Grassland Region.

Figure 9: Agricultural Lands*



**Examples of responses included in this grouping include: farm land, black and brown soil and cultivated land.*

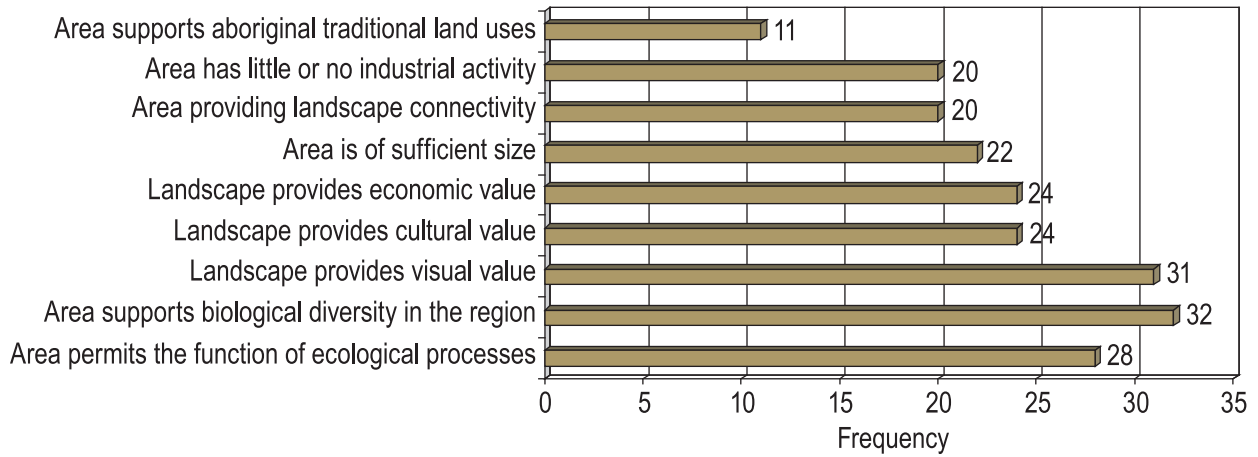
Figure 10: Mountains*



**Examples of responses included in this grouping include: mountain parks, mountain slopes and Montane.*

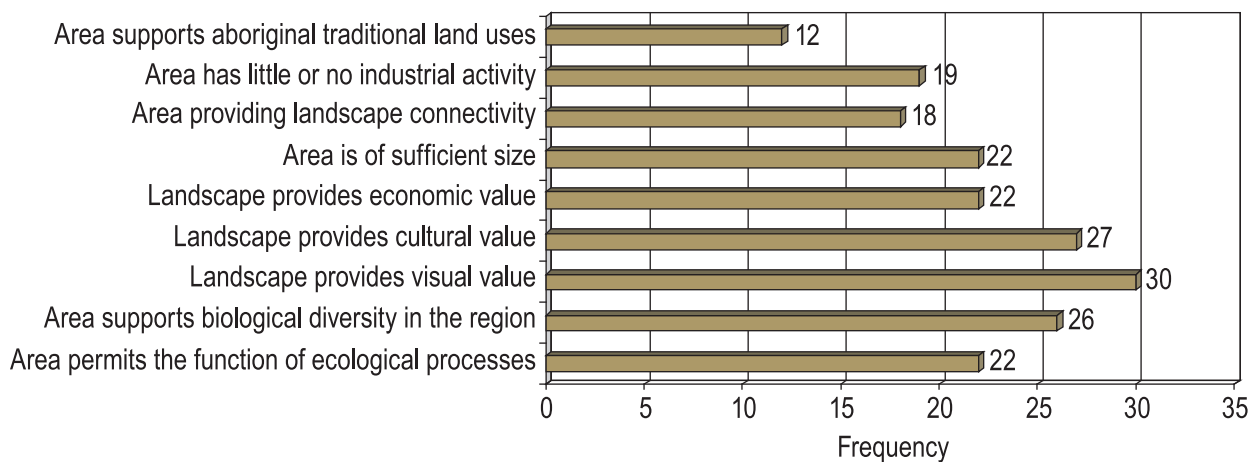


Figure 11: Rocky Mountains*



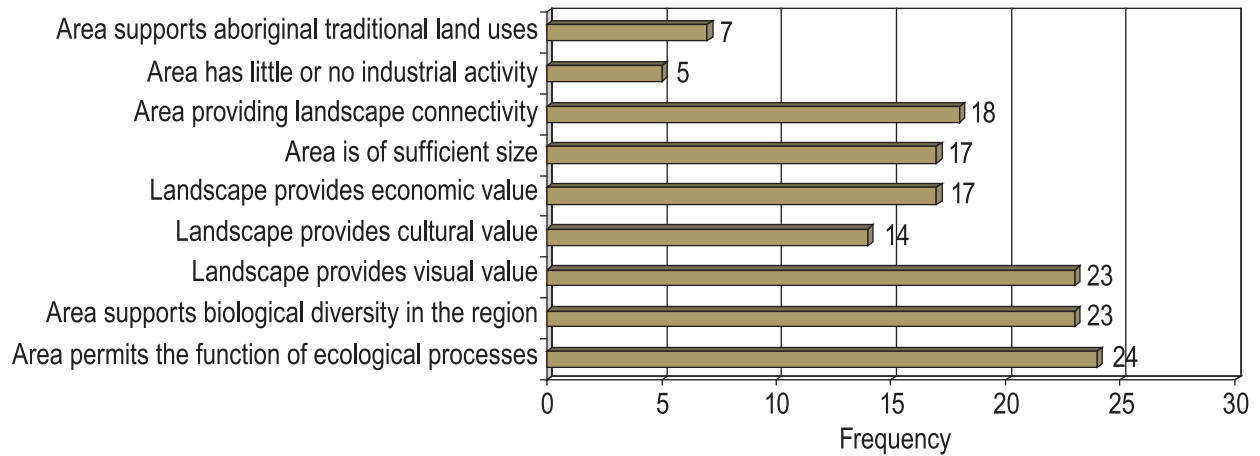
*Examples of responses included in this grouping include: the Rockies and Rocky Mountain Natural Area.

Figure 12: Badlands*



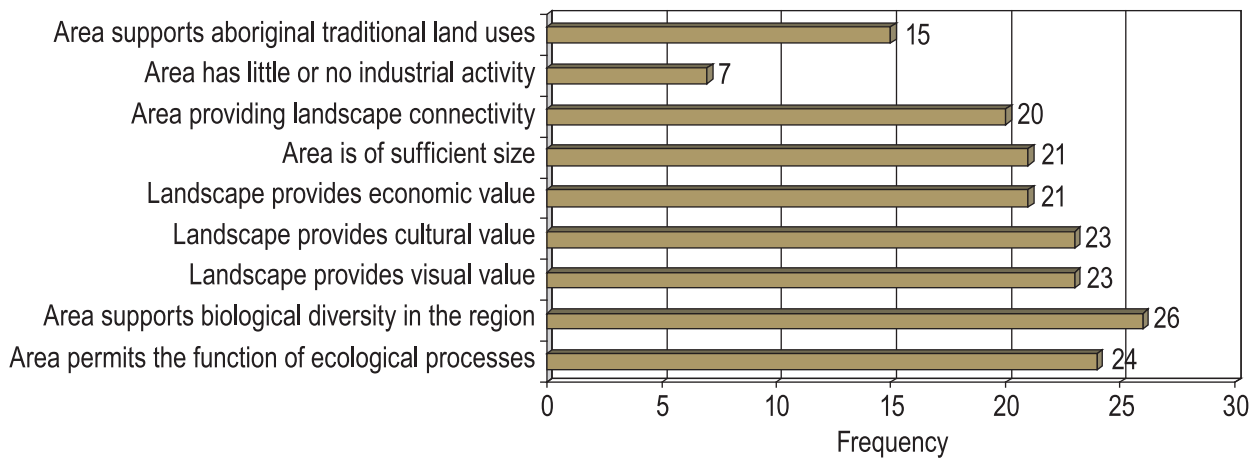
*Examples of responses included in this grouping include: Badlands area, Drumbeller area and Dinosaur Park.

Figure 13: Forests*



**Examples of responses included in this grouping include: forest areas, old growth forests and Aspen forests.*

Figure 14: Bow River*



**Examples of responses included in this grouping include: Bow River basin, corridor, watershed and valley, headwaters.*



Figure 15: Cypress Hills

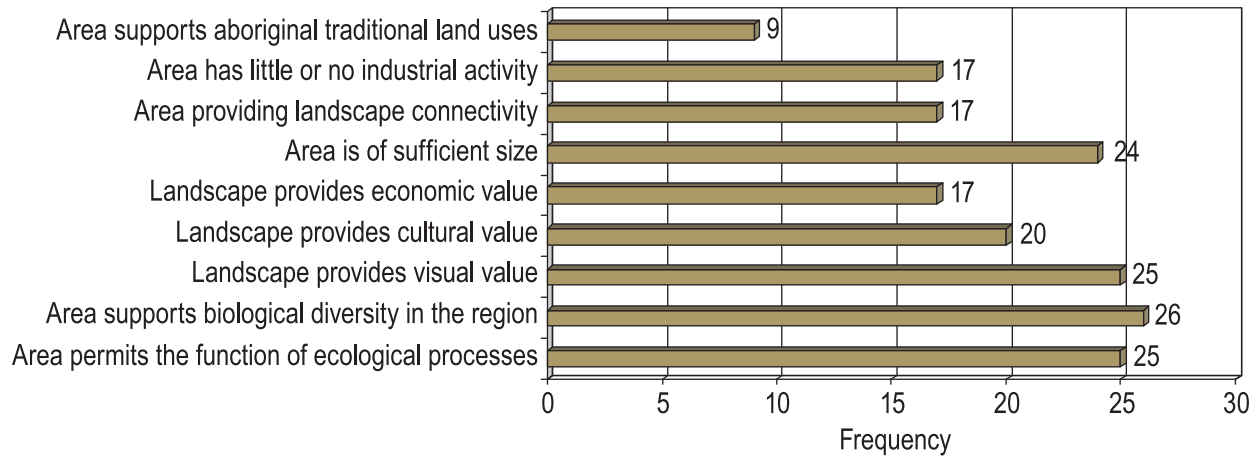
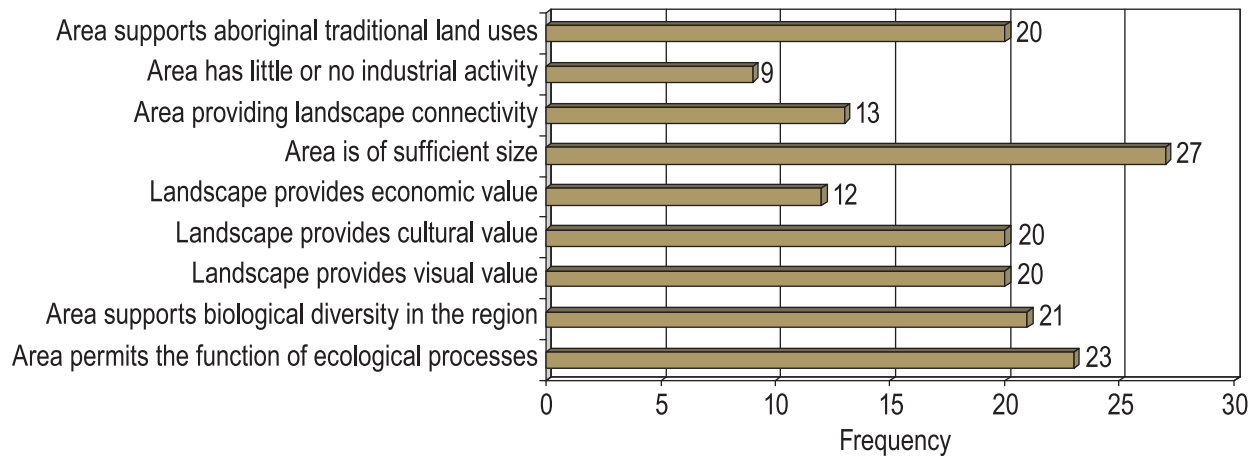


Figure 16: Oldman River*



*Examples of responses included in this grouping include: Oldman River reservoir, basin, dam and intersection.

Figure 17: Porcupine Hills

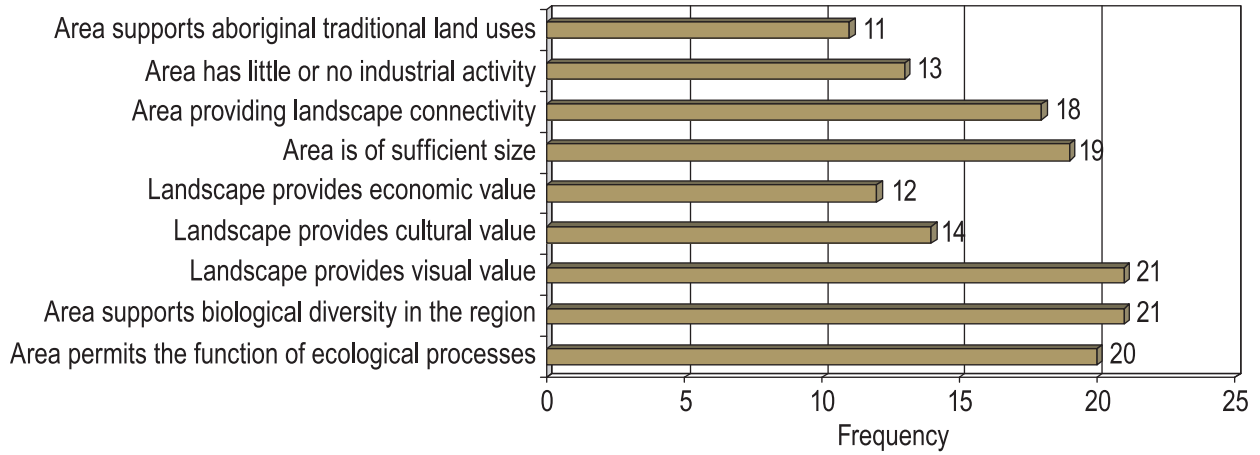
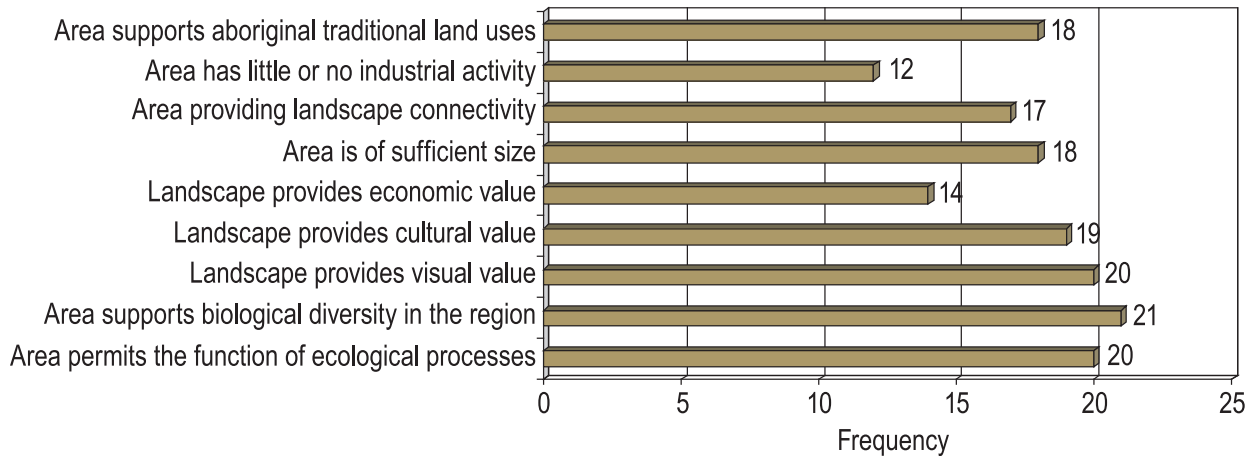


Figure 18: Castle Mountain Area*



**Examples of responses included in this grouping include: Castle Mountain, Castle Special Management Area, Castle watershed, Castle headwaters, Castle wilderness area, Castle Special Place and Castle river valley.*



Important SSR landscapes that should be considered for conservation and were identified less often, in order of frequency of mention, included:

- Milk River;
- Parkland Natural Region;
- Kananaskis Country;
- South Saskatchewan River;
- Crowsnest Pass;
- Red Deer River;
- Livingstone Range;
- Waterton Lakes Provincial Park;
- Aboriginal lands;
- Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park;
- Highway 22 corridor; and
- Suffield sand hills (Middle Sand Hills).

When the important landscapes were tallied by the total number of criterion respondents assigned to each landscape (i.e., total number of reasons why the landscape should be considered for conservation), the same 15 landscapes that were identified by frequency of mention were again in the top 15 positions. Slight differences between responses by total number of criterion compared to responses by frequency of mention included:

- Agricultural lands were in seventh place instead of sixth;
- Mountains were in sixth position rather the seventh;
- Forests fell from 10th place to 15th; and
- Castle wilderness was 13th instead of 15th.

Section 5: High Value Tourism and Recreation Lands

5a. Workbook participants were asked to identify two regionally significant areas or features that should be considered high value tourism and recreation locations, and to indicate the reasons why the locations merit consideration. Further, respondents were asked to provide comment on the enhancements or upgrades required for each location identified.

Workbook participants provided 616 individual suggestions for areas or features worthy of high value tourism and recreation consideration. The workbook responses were reviewed and organized by common grouping. It is important to note that, as with valued landscapes, respondents' interpretation of the term high valued tourism or recreation areas or features varied and responses were diverse.

The following section presents the nine high value tourism and recreation locations respondents identified most commonly (i.e., locations or features receiving more than 20 mentions) in order of frequency of mention. Summaries of respondent input regarding the principal reasons for deeming the location high value, and the improvements and enhancements considered necessary are provided for each location. This is followed by a list of the tourism and recreation lands, which received more than three or four, but less than 20 mentions; these are also presented in order of frequency of mention.

Cypress Hills

When asked which regionally significant areas or features in the SSR should be considered high value tourism and recreation locations, Cypress Hills was the location mentioned most often. Respondents' reasons for deeming Cypress Hills regionally significant are presented in order of frequency as follows.

Geographically and ecologically unique

- Most often, workbook participants indicated that Cypress Hills is worthy of high value tourism and recreation status because, within both the province and the region, the area offers unique geological and ecological features;
- Respondents referenced a range of aspects of Cypress Hills considered to be distinctive, including: land features, ecology, biodiversity, flora, land formations, landscape, terrain and topography; and
- A few specifically noted that the area is unique because retreating glaciers bypassed it during the last ice age.



Rich biodiversity

- Some respondents said that Cypress Hills is significant because it offers diverse habitat, which supports a wide range of wildlife as well as many endangered and rare species; and
- In this context, a few indicated that while the area offers tourism and recreation potential, the sensitive ecosystem requires protection.

Cultural and historical significance

- In a few cases, workbook participants believed that Cypress Hills' historic and archeological resources make it an important location in the SSR; another few made specific reference to the area's rich aboriginal heritage.

Additional reasons given less frequently

- The area offers scenic views and is aesthetically beautiful;
- Cypress Hills is an established tourism and recreation destination with existing infrastructure;
- The area has significant and diverse tourism and recreation development potential (e.g., fishing, biking, quading, camping, water sports, cross-country skiing, etc.);
- Cypress Hills offers both summer and winter recreation opportunities; and
- It is a designated dark sky preserve.

Workbook participants were asked what enhancements and upgrades are required in Cypress Hills. Suggestions forwarded more than once included:

- Establish development and management guidelines that protect the environment in general, and specifically protect sensitive landscapes, water resources, riparian areas, viewsapes and native prairie grasses, rare plant and animal habitat;
- Develop more campsites and improve existing camping facilities - make sites larger to accommodate RVs, develop more electrical sites, provide sewer and garbage facilities in campgrounds and upgrade roads;
- Create environmental stewardship public education programs;
- Develop more interpretive sites and expand interpretive centre programs;
- Expand trail system and upgrade and better maintain existing trails;
- Increase access to government lease land; and
- Develop more motorized vehicle trails (e.g., ATV and snowmobile).

Individual suggestions included:

- Expand the golf course;
- Expand the public beach area;
- Increase wayfinding opportunities;
- Increase the number of parking spaces available near the beach;
- Provide better access to the Fort Walsh National Historic Site;
- Improve signage;
- Develop an observatory and a clearing for people to set up telescopes;
- Increase eco-tourism development;
- Fund cougar research;
- Expand existing tourism and recreation infrastructure;
- Develop more diverse accommodations (e.g., motels and cabins); and
- Upgrade local highways 41 and 61.

Water Resources

Water resources rivalled Cypress Hills for top spot as a regionally significant feature or location deserving high value tourism and recreation recognition. It is worth noting that all generic references to water-related features (e.g., rivers, lakes, streams, riparian areas and wetlands) were captured under this grouping. Respondents' rationale for considering water resources worthy of high value status largely fell into two camps, namely: the abundance of existing and potential recreational opportunities presented by the range of water resources in the SSR and the inherent ecological value of the region's water resources.

Multiple recreational opportunities

- Nearly three quarters of respondent comments pertained to either all waterways in the SSR, (rivers, river valleys, corridors and basins), streams, lakes or reservoirs. Here, workbook respondents most frequently talked about the range of recreational opportunities afforded by these water resources, such as scenic viewing, paddling, swimming and fishing.
- A few highlighted the recreational activities provided by wetlands, noting that bird watching is one of the most popular pastimes in North America.
- While some participants saw potential for increasing water-based recreation in the SSR, there was general agreement that future development must be environmentally sustainable. A few suggested competing demands (e.g., industrial, agricultural and recreational) for water must be carefully managed to protect water supply; and
- Others referenced the high tourism and recreation value of water resources in proximity to urban centres.



Ecological value

- While the ecological value of the SSR's water resources was a message that echoed throughout the responses, it was particularly pronounced in relation to wetlands and riparian areas;
- In this context, respondents indicated that riparian areas along rivers and streams are the most biologically diverse in the region and should be a priority for preservation;
- Others emphasized that wetlands are important for preserving water quality and for providing habitats for a diverse range of wildlife and migratory waterfowl; one said that the ecological goods and services wetlands provide are largely overlooked and misunderstood; and
- Across the comments, there was a general call to protect the integrity of water resources in the SSR.

Respondents provided a variety of opinions regarding necessary enhancements and upgrades related to water resources. Suggestions offered more than once included:

- Develop and expand camping facilities and recreational infrastructure (e.g., low impact staging areas, trail systems, boat launches, docks, parking and waste facilities) in proximity to water bodies;
- Establish policies and regulations to protect watersheds, riparian areas, water quality and aquatic ecosystems, for example:
 - Regulate effluent from agriculture and other industry along waterways;
 - Restrict livestock from direct access to rivers and streams, change grazing policy;
 - Implement sustainable land-use practices;
 - Limit logging;
 - Establish setbacks and green areas around water sources;
 - Re-establish buffer zones on private and public lands that protect riparian zones;
 - Enact a new wetland policy to ensure there is no net loss; and
 - Implement a system of landowner incentives to help protect riparian areas.
- Ensure that public access to waterways is maintained – develop access points for passive users (e.g., water floaters, fishermen and paddlers);
- Increase enforcement of existing regulations;
- Halt the development of additional recreational facilities or sites; focus on improving existing recreational infrastructure to provide a better experience; and
- Maintain water levels for fish production during critical points of the year; manage water flows for in-stream biological communities.

Individual suggestions included:

- Develop standards that local authorities, agencies and developers must meet to develop water bodies as an ecological tourism resource;
- Restore lost wetlands;
- Implement strong restrictions and approval processes for all commercial or private product or services that are on provincial or federal lands;
- Plant trees and shrubs around wetland to increase small mammal numbers and to provide for birds requiring elevated nesting sites;
- Ban motorboats on lakes;
- Implement shoreline cleanups of trash on all rivers;
- Develop wetlands observation stations and interpretive signage;
- Limit off-road vehicle access; and
- Increase partnerships with nearby agricultural users to protect the riparian areas.

Prairie and Grassland

The next most frequently named high value tourism and recreation location was the SSR's prairie and grassland. Respondents' reasons for identifying these areas clustered around three main themes.

Unique habitat

- Approximately one-third of respondents viewed prairie and grassland as a high value tourism and recreation location due to the unique habitat they provide for animals, birds and plants;
- In this context, respondents noted opportunities for viewing of, and education about, habitat-specific wildlife, birds and flora; and
- Several noted that prairie and grassland are home to a large proportion of Alberta's endangered species.

Endangered ecosystem

- Some respondents said that prairie and grassland warrant priority consideration because very little natural grassland remains in the province – it should be preserved for its inherent value.
- Several said that due to the sensitivities involved with this ecosystem, activities should be limited to ecotourism and low-impact (non-motorized) recreation.



Historical and cultural significance

- A number of respondents indicated that prairie and grassland are of historical and First Nations cultural significance, both to Alberta and to Canada as a whole. Specific examples included Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, the Milk River and Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park.

Additional reasons given less frequently

- The area acts as a carbon sink and invaluable aquifer;
- The landscape affords stunning vistas;
- Prairie and grassland provide an opportunity for connection with a simpler part of our past; and
- Opportunities exist for sustainable hunting, fishing and boating, and for sustainable economic activity such as bison grazing.

Respondents had a variety of opinions about enhancements and upgrades required in prairie and grassland locations. Suggestions from more than one individual included:

- Reduce industrial activities (e.g., oil and gas exploration), grazing and cultivation in prairie and grassland locations;
- Restore and reclaim areas to their natural state using native species;
- Prevent further loss of native grassland (e.g., through parks legislation);
- Provide additional amenities and activities such as interpretive centres, information signs, tourist pullouts, eco-walks, access trails and camping spots;
- Limit motorized access; and
- Do no further enhancements or upgrades – leave the area as is.

Individual suggestions included:

- Buy back surface and subsurface rights on these lands – lease out facilities rather than selling land;
- Stop motorized vehicle use in the south Castle drainage at Beavermine Lakes;
- Employ local people for weed control and environmental reclamation;
- Provide incentives for users of prairie and grassland to maintain the areas' ecological integrity;
- Educate the public about the importance of these areas;
- Manage the number of visitors to areas of important wildlife habitat; and
- Conduct research to identify areas under threat.

Bow River Sub-basin

Slightly fewer respondents named the Bow River Sub-basin as a regionally significant area for high value tourism or recreation. They provided, in order of frequency, the following rationales:

Recreational fishery

- Half of the comments included mention of the Bow River as a world-class sport fishery. Respondents noted the fishery's existing and potential economic impacts, particularly for fly-fishing.

Multiple recreational opportunities

- Respondents also cited an abundance of other recreational activities afforded by the Bow River Sub-basin including water-based recreation (canoeing, kayaking, boating and rafting), bird watching, wildlife viewing, hiking and biking.

Proximity to population centres

- In several cases, respondents believed that the Bow River Sub-basin should be considered a high value tourism and recreation location due to its proximity to major centres, notably Calgary.

Scenic value

- A number of respondents commented on the area's outstanding scenic value.

Additional reasons given less frequently

- The Bow River watershed provides half of Calgary's drinking water;
- The area provides excellent wildlife habitat;
- The Bow River corridor is an area of great biodiversity, with a high proportion of threatened animal and plant species; and
- Large numbers of Albertans recreate in the Bow corridor.

As for desirable upgrades or enhancements, several respondents called for increased protection of land and water in the Bow River corridor – the river edge, riparian areas and greenbelts were specifically mentioned. Several others recommended improved access, defined variously as higher fish limits, improved and expanded camping facilities, better access points to fish or paddle the river and more hiking trails.



Individual suggestions included:

- Develop competition venues for sporting events such as triathlons, horse trials, horse endurance competitions and mountain bike racing;
- Control invasive plants;
- Minimize development in watersheds;
- Maintain a sustainable water flow to support fish and wildlife;
- Address water pollution from the old gas plant in the Turner Valley; and
- Develop a system of paths to connect Calgary to the mountains.

Milk River Basin

A similar number of respondents saw the Milk River as a regionally significant area. They placed equal emphasis on the area's recreation opportunities, species at risk and unique features.

Outstanding recreation opportunities

- Respondents noted several high quality recreation uses of the Milk River, including a warm river for swimming, safe waters for canoeing, excellent wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities, and multi-day hiking.

Species at risk

- Respondents remarked that the area's grassland and prairie wilderness provide a high concentration of rare species and species at risk, as well as a connecting corridor for migrating species.

Unique landscape

- It was also noted that the topography and features of the Milk River are unique to the province (e.g., plateaus, escarpments, rare petroglyphs, fossils and diversity of geological features).

Additional reasons given less frequently

- The Milk River area's scenic value is unusual;
- The area has international bilateral historical value since it is shared by Canada and the United States;
- Given its proximity to population centres and other tourist destinations, the area offers excellent potential for low-impact wilderness recreation and ecotourism; and
- The area is sacred to First Nations.

The majority of suggested upgrades or enhancements pertained to increased public access to grazing leases and additional accommodation options, such as bed and breakfasts, ranch exposure programs, eco-lodges and backcountry campgrounds.

Individual suggestions included:

- Enhance the Milk River provincial campground;
- Closely police the area for abuses;
- Encourage foot traffic and limit vehicular traffic;
- Provide incentives for landowners to protect important landscapes;
- Phase out industrial activity and focus on grazing management;
- Promote the area, but limit the types of tourist activities to protect the landscape;
- Designate the area as protected through parks and protected areas legislation;
- Enforce the *Water Act* and regulations;
- Provide additional resources for park staff at Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park;
- Address water pollution from the old gas plant in the Turner Valley; and
- Develop a system of paths to connect Calgary to the mountains.

Porcupine Hills

Some respondents identified the Porcupine Hills as a high value tourism or recreation area.

Unique landscape

- In a number of cases, respondents described the area as distinct from other landscapes in the SSR, naming such features as high altitude trails, unique ecosystems and glacial history.

Low impact recreation

- Several respondents indicated that the value of Porcupine Hills as a recreation area lies with low impact, non-motorized recreation – OHV access needs to be limited and penalties for abuse enforced. (In contrast, one respondent noted motorized recreation as a high value activity for the area.)

Area is largely pristine

- A few respondents suggested Porcupine Hills has high value in the SSR because it is comparatively undisturbed and undeveloped.



Rich biodiversity

- The area was also noted for its biodiversity, rare plant species, wildlife habitat and corridors.

Additional reasons given less frequently

- The area has cultural and historical significance;
- The Porcupine Hills is naturally beautiful, however scenic vistas are being spoiled by clear cuts;
- The area's proximity to major cities means large numbers of recreational users and significant local economic benefits; and
- The area has numerous water sources.

The main enhancements respondents called for were:

- Protect all or parts of the area from industrial development; and
- Manage motorized recreation – development of designated trails, regulated use and enforcement of regulations.

Individual suggestions included:

- Repair damage already caused from unregulated OHV use;
- Do not develop additional recreation facilities;
- Prohibit random camping;
- Require people to register when entering or leaving public areas;
- Provide campgrounds, trails, shelters, visitor centre; and
- Control tree growth to preserve grassland habitat and grazing land.

Foothills

The Foothills was sixth on the list of locations considered to be regionally significant areas in the SSR with high value for tourism or recreation. Workbook participants offered, in order of frequency of mention, a list of reasons.

Multiple recreational opportunities

- Just under a third of the comments referenced the abundance of land- and water-based recreational opportunities available in the foothills; respondents cited myriad examples, such as: horseback riding, fishing, hunting, canoeing and wildlife viewing and camping.

Scenic value

- In several cases, respondents spoke about the exceptional scenic beauty of the foothills landscapes; and
- A few said the foothills should be designated regionally significant to ensure that the area's signature landscapes are protected.

Historically and culturally significant

- Some respondents said that the foothills warrant high value status because it is a touchstone to western heritage and cowboy culture.

Additional reasons given less frequently

- The foothills ecosystem is sensitive and should be deemed high value to ensure that the ecological integrity is maintained;
- The area is accessible to a large population base given its proximity to Calgary; and
- Tourism and recreation development will serve to diversify the local economy.

Workbook participants offered a variety of comments on enhancements and upgrades required in the foothills. Suggestions from one or more individuals included:

- Expand the trail network onto the leased land to ensure a high value experience for users; improve and maintain existing trails;
- Restrict off-road activities in all parkland/sensitive areas;
- Increase tourism and recreation marketing and promotions initiatives;
- Disallow motorized access to the Shell Waterton Loop to protect wintering wildlife; and
- Provide staging areas at the forestry boundary that allows for camping and hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders access to the area.

Individual suggestions included:

- Buy back surface and subsurface rights on these lands, re-inventory resources, revalue circa 2009 and conserve for extensive public use;
- Ensure public access in a controlled manner; utilize similar land-use programs as that used in the Magrath area for access to private land for hunting, fishing, hiking;
- Provide more camping areas and places to access watercourses for fishing and hunting;
- Limit clearing of native grassland, scrub and native trees; establish an incentive-based program to encourage landowners to maintain native landscapes;



- Establish educational and interpretive programs and infrastructure in the Porcupine Hills;
- Disallow the subdivision of grazing lands along Highway 22; and
- Provide incentives for people living in these areas to open more bed and breakfasts.

Castle Mountain Area

A few workbook participants supported designating the Castle Mountain area as a high value tourism and recreation location. The following section summarizes respondents' explanations for considering the area regionally significant.

Rich biodiversity

- Some respondents suggested that the Castle area warrants high value consideration because its biodiversity is among the highest in Alberta; and
- A few stressed the importance of maintaining the environmental integrity of the area, indicating that the Castle area is vital to the health of Waterton Lakes and Glacier national parks, and is a key piece of the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem and the Yellowstone to Yukon corridor.

Established tourism and recreation infrastructure

- A few workbook participants said the Castle is a significant tourism and recreation location because of the supply of established infrastructure; respondents specifically referenced the Castle Mountain Resort, camping facilities and the trail systems; and
- A few noted that Castle Mountain Resort is an important destination for many Albertans; others said the resort has further development potential.

Additional reasons given less frequently

- Castle Mountain area is scenic and pristine;
- The area offers a range of recreational opportunities (hiking, fishing, skiing);
- Castle Mountain Resort offers the best skiing in Alberta;
- Recreational use of the area will support local economies and stimulate employment; and
- The area is suitable for low-impact natural experiences.

Workbook participants forwarded a variety of ideas regarding required enhancements and upgrades. Suggestions made by more than one individual included:

- Develop and implement policy and legislation to preserve the ecological integrity of the Castle;
- Repair and upgrade designated campgrounds and picnic areas;
- Increase monitoring and enforcement;

- Restrict off-road vehicle access and random camping;
- Improve and maintain designated trail system to make it safer and to protect sensitive habitat;
- Install bridges over watercourses; and
- Improve access by paving roads.

Individual suggestions included:

- Designate campground areas for specific uses (e.g., family camps and off-road vehicles);
- Enhance existing staging areas for both motorized and equestrian recreationalists;
- Control vehicular access, random camping and industrial development;
- Develop information kiosks; and
- Restrict free-roaming camping and off-road vehicles.

Kananaskis Country

Respondents who defined Kananaskis Country (K-Country) as a high value tourism or recreation area in the SSR did so for three main reasons:

Abundance of recreation opportunities

- Respondents noted Kananaskis Country's low-impact (i.e., non-motorized) recreation opportunities in all four seasons.

Natural beauty

- A number of respondents cited the area's natural beauty as reason enough to consider it a high value tourism or recreation area.

Ease of accessibility from Calgary

- Respondents valued Kananaskis Country's easy access from Calgary.

Additional reasons given less frequently

- Kananaskis is somewhat protected from development, yet has sufficient basic infrastructure;
- The area is less busy, with fewer users, than Banff National Park; and
- It includes an important water reservoir.



Several respondents suggested that the best way government can enhance Kananaskis Country is by stopping or severely restricting industrial use, particularly commercial logging. Other individual suggestions included:

- Improve access;
- Develop roofed accommodations in central areas;
- Protect sensitive areas from tourist access;
- Upgrade Nakiska resort;
- Encourage redevelopment of Fortress Mountain and on-hill accommodation for downhill skiing;
- Expand the boundaries of K-Country;
- Provide educational materials at key sites;
- Encourage user groups to champion key areas; and
- Avoid overdeveloping facilities – keep K-Country simple.

Other high value tourism and recreation locations

High value tourism and recreation locations in the SSR that were identified less often, in order of frequency of mention, included:

- Crowsnest Pass;
- City of Calgary;
- Ghost Waiparous;
- Mountains;
- Oldman River Valley;
- Waterton Lakes National Park;
- Irrigation infrastructure;
- McLean Creek;
- South Saskatchewan River Basin;
- Rocky Mountains;
- Writing-on-Stone;
- Suffield sand hills (Middle Sand Hills);
- Crown lands;
- Cowboy Trail;
- The Whaleback;
- Lake Newell;
- Ridge Park;
- Fortress Mountain;
- National and provincial parks;
- Coulees;
- Turner Valley Gas Plant;
- Dinosaur Provincial Park; and
- Parkland areas.

5b. Workbook respondents were invited to provide advice to the GoA for maintaining the integrity of high value recreation and tourism.

More than 400 workbook participants offered suggestions for maintaining the integrity of high value recreation and recreation lands. Although the advice provided varied from very specific directions to general guidelines, many of the suggestions focused on the environment and how best to protect it. Respondents generally agreed that the environmental integrity of land and water resources should override tourism and recreation development and activities. Some individuals favoured limiting access to and/or specifying appropriate types of use in environmentally sensitive landscapes; others believed that commercial and industrial development should be restricted or prohibited in high value locations. Mentioned less often was the need for enforcement of current and future regulations, the need for educating the public about conservation and appropriate behaviour, and the importance of including the local community in decisions regarding tourism and recreation. The following section provides a summary of comments organized by key theme in order of frequency of mention.

Limit access and/or specify use

- Many workbook participants suggested that multiple-use policy may be obsolete and does not do enough to protect the environment. They said that the land in some areas cannot support numerous and/or certain recreational activities, so user-specific areas (e.g., family camps, OHV areas and passive foot-only areas), based on research indicating which activities are safe for the environment, may need to be implemented;
- A small number of comments focused on restricting all use of environmentally sensitive areas preferring the areas be maintained in their natural state;
- Comments indicated a concern about OHV activities due to the extent to which they affect the ecosystem. Although a handful of respondents would like specific OHV areas with managed, maintained and improved trails, most of those who mentioned OHVs would like to see their use reduced or eliminated;
- User fees, rotating closures of trails, user permits and restricting the number of users were all suggested as ways to limit impacts;
- In a few cases, respondents called for the development of access management plans; and
- For respondents indicating limited use, there was general agreement that public lands should not be sold.



Prioritize environmental protection

- Most often, respondents believed that environmental protection should be the GoA's main focus. In general, participants indicated that maintaining the environmental integrity of land and water resources should trump tourism and recreation development and activities;
- Some participants noted that the viability of tourism and recreation in the SSR is inextricably linked to a healthy environment. Respondents urged the GoA to maintain the qualities that give these features and locations high tourism and recreation value in the first place;
- According to a few, carrying capacities should be determined and environmental thresholds and targets established prior to any development occurring;
- A few encouraged the government to reclaim areas damaged by recreational activities to their natural state;
- Providing landowners with incentives for conservation efforts was supported by a few respondents; and
- A small number urged the GoA to make a significant investment into conservation and stewardship initiatives.

Restrict and/or prohibit development

- Some respondents' comments focused on limiting, preventing and/or removing industrial and commercial developments in high value tourism and recreation locations and environmentally sensitive areas;
- Workbook participants specifically mentioned the Eastern Slopes, Castle Mountain area, Elbow Valley watershed, Porcupine Hills and Cypress Hills;
- Respondents cited a range of developments requiring limits, most often: urban sprawl, energy (i.e., oil and gas and wind energy), recreation and tourism, forestry and residential developments; and
- A few supported a moratorium on major industrial developments.

Promote sustainable development and balanced use

- A few workbook participants believed that environmental protection and multi-use development could go hand-in-hand if based on user-impact research;
- A few respondents thought multiple-use areas could thrive if implemented properly and if restrictions were enforced;
- In a few cases, respondents talked about the need to balance land use with sound ecological and biological principles; others underlined the need to strike a balance between economic, environmental and social considerations; and
- While sustainable, multi-use development was considered possible by a few, the importance of protecting the environment was usually emphasized.

Establish more parks and protected areas

- A few viewed the development of additional parks and protected areas as an effective means of protecting the integrity of high value tourism and recreation resources;
- The rationale for this was usually to protect and conserve the environment from further destruction;
- A few others indicated that additional parks and natural areas would reduce the pressure on existing park and recreation areas; and
- A few mentioned that the Castle Mountain area would make an ideal park.

Increase enforcement

- A few workbook participants highlighted the need for increased enforcement, particularly as it relates to regulations to protect environmental resources;
- In some cases, respondents emphasized the need to enforce existing regulations; a few others called for stricter regulations in addition to increased enforcement;
- Others indicated that current regulations might not be consistently enforced. This appeared to be directed at restrictions regarding OHV use;
- Respondents understood that for regulations to be enforced there is a need for more staff and more money dedicated to regulation enforcement; and
- A few suggested implementing and/or increasing user fees and access permits to generate revenue for enforcement.

Increase investment in tourism and recreation

- In a few cases, participants urged the GoA to proactively develop and maintain tourism and recreation facilities and infrastructure that will enhance visitor experiences. Respondents most frequently called for upgraded and expanded campgrounds and trail systems;
- Some encouraged the GoA to increase efforts to market and promote tourism and recreation; they specifically mentioned unique aspects of the region, local attractions and heritage sites; and
- Others cited recent as well as Klein-era cutbacks, and generally urged the GoA to increase investment in tourism and recreation.



Work with the local community, user groups and tourism stakeholders

- A few participants highlighted the importance of providing individuals living in proximity to tourism and recreation locations with opportunity to influence decisions;
- A few supported town hall meetings or open houses where the public and industry could exchange information and discuss concerns; and
- Others encouraged the GoA to seek advice from, and partner with: user groups, non government organizations and tourism and recreation industry stakeholders.

Increase public education

- Public education was mentioned as a potential tool for helping people understand which behaviours are, and are not, appropriate within parks and other environmentally sensitive areas; and
- There was recognition that many people do not understand how their behaviours negatively impact the environment, and it was hoped that educating the public would foster a stewardship ethic.

Other comments

Following are the opinions and comments forwarded less frequently:

- A few said that the management of tourism and recreation facilities should not be contracted out to private operators. They suggested the quality of tourism and recreation infrastructure has declined with privatization;
- Some believed that agricultural land use should trump tourism and recreation. These respondents said that tourism and recreation is a short-term economic activity, while agriculture is a sustainable, long-term land use; and
- In a few cases, management and/or the lack of a plan was mentioned as a potential reason for some of the issues in the SSR. It was suggested that a well-designed plan that was implemented, reviewed and maintained by qualified staff was needed.

5c. Workbook participants were asked to provide advice for better managing recreational activities on public lands.

In total, 435 respondents provided written comments regarding the management of recreational activities on public land. The key themes that were generated from this feedback included: public access issues, recreational infrastructure and facility improvement, enforcement and budget enhancements, management strategies and an increase in public education and training. The following section summarizes the suggestions provided most frequently.

Implement recreational fees, permits and/or licences for access to public lands

- Several respondents urged for the implementation of recreational user fees to access public lands, trails and camping sites. Respondents believed that fees would promote personal responsibility, decrease abusive activities and funds could be used to increase enforcement. The types of user fees that were suggested included annual permits, day use permits, licences, licence plate tags for OHV backcountry permits and trail access fees;
- A few individuals suggested the development of a registration system to track access to public lands and/or facility use for recreational purposes (e.g., camping). One respondent requested the ability for private groups to purchase recreational areas (similar to preference quotas for cattle grazing), which could be transferable; and
- According to a few respondents, a quota system should be established to limit use (e.g., hunting, fishing and OHV) and access to sensitive areas.

Better manage motorized vehicle use

- Some individuals firmly indicated that the use of motorized vehicles should be banned on all public lands. Respondents believed that the use of motorized vehicles is destructive to the environment;
- Some respondents indicated that motorized vehicle use should be restricted. Use should not be permitted in the Eastern Slopes and south Castle drainage area, or within the backcountry, headwaters, high elevations, waterways, sensitive areas, native grassland or protected areas. A few individuals stated that motorized vehicles should not be used for recreational purposes, and should only be permitted by lease or permit holders;
- According to a few individuals, motorized vehicle use should be contained to designated areas, which are separate from non-motorized recreation. These specific places should have staging areas and designated routes that are planned on less sensitive land (e.g., gravel pits, poor agriculture value, future logging areas, etc.). Conversely, a few individuals claimed that dispersing recreational activity over all public lands would be better than concentrating specific activities on small portions of public lands;



- According to a few individuals, the GoA needs to provide clear guidelines on motorized vehicle use on public lands;
- A few respondents remarked that motorized vehicle use should be enforced with stricter rules (e.g., access, noise, emissions, numbers and seasonal use);
- One respondent stressed the need to distinguish between the use of motorized vehicles as a primary recreational experience versus their use as a transportation method to access areas for non-motorized activities;
- Another individual expressed that the conflict between OHV users and other recreational users needs to be proactively addressed; and
- One respondent supported the use of motorized vehicles in well-managed areas.

Improve trail systems, associated amenities and recreational infrastructure

- A few individuals pressed for the establishment of a high quality and sustainable trail system with associated campsites. Trails should be designed to reflect the type of use (e.g., OHV, hiking, equestrian, biking and cross-country skiing);
- According to a few respondents, selective trails should be rehabilitated (e.g., high use), re-routed (e.g., away from riparian areas) and the rest should be reclaimed;
- A few respondents requested clear signage, restoration of interpretive trail signs, as well as ongoing trail maintenance;
- Some identified the need for more staging areas with outhouses, parking sites, maps, picnic tables and available water. A few respondents commented that there is a need for quality recreational facilities with a higher standard of maintenance. Suggestions were provided to either upgrade or build additional facilities that are designed to be low-maintenance, efficient and environmentally sound; and
- According to a few respondents, more campgrounds should be developed with various levels of services to reduce random camping. A few individuals stated that random camping should not be permitted. One respondent said that campgrounds should be designed according to a specific recreational use (e.g., family hiking and OHV use).

Provide the public with greater access to public lands

- According to some respondents, access management needs to be addressed, controlled and should include a full suite of management tools ranging from education to enforcement;
- Individuals generally commented that there should be more access points with fair guidelines, rules and/or laws governing land use. Access to rivers, streams and recreational opportunities were highly valued. One respondent noted that activities that destroy or damage land should not be permitted;

- A few respondents indicated that the public should be able to access leased Crown land without permission from the leaseholder. A few individuals called for the implementation of a system to easily contact the leaseholder or land manager. One respondent suggested that all leaseholders post their name and phone number every mile on public roads;
- In a few cases, respondents stated that agricultural disposition leaseholders should not restrict access to their lands. In contrast, other individuals stressed that leaseholders should be able to control and refuse access to their lands. Another individual stated that public users should pay the leaseholder for access to their land, stressing the need for greater compensation to leaseholders for damages resulting from public users; and
- A few individuals did not support the pursuit of protected area status for the Eastern Slopes; respondents said that access should not be restricted on Crown lands. They said that industry has provided access (e.g., roads) to this area, which has allowed for a much more diverse group of people to enjoy Crown lands. In contrast, a few respondents did support converting public lands into protected areas in order to minimize disturbances on sensitive natural areas.

Increase enforcement capacity, fines and penalties

- Several respondents stressed that more personnel (e.g., conservation and forestry officers, rangers and wardens) are required on public lands to enforce regulations and fine abusers. Enforcement should be a priority issue in order to reduce destructive activities, and should be increased during peak seasons and holidays. One respondent suggested that volunteers and user groups could be recruited to support enforcers and increase capacity;
- A few individuals indicated that enforcement staff should be given more authority, allowed to give out higher fines and should be equipped with proper protective gear such as sidearms;
- According to some respondents, improving relationships between leaseholders, government and users, as well as setting up practical rules and regulations, will facilitate self-policing of public lands;
- A few individuals indicated that enforcement and monitoring activities require higher budgets;
- Some respondents urged for higher fines, jail time and severe penalties (e.g., confiscate OHVs) for noncompliance;
- Others emphasized the need for better and increased enforcement of existing rules, regulations, management plans (e.g., access management plans) and laws. Respondents cautioned against spending time on developing new laws, as enforcement and budgets are needed for current legislation; and
- Another noted that recreation is the only unregulated activity on public lands. The government regulates all energy extraction, forestry and grazing activities and users are accountable for their actions. This regulation should be applied to recreational activities.



Establish clear and robust recreational management plans

- Respondents said there is a need for the GoA to provide clear and firm management plans, guidelines and objectives regarding recreation on public lands; they stated that a commitment to enforcement is necessary;
- According to a few individuals, current models, precedents, research and management plans should be used as guiding instruments for creating land-use policy and decisions;
- Others voiced their concern that recreation management does not currently exist on public lands. Respondents suggested the use of adaptive management, cumulative effects management and managing visitor behaviour, which is place-based and outcome-specific;
- A few respondents said that any recreational management plan would need to be designed with a sustainable triple-bottom-line approach, which is continually monitored and updated. Sustainable tourism, ecotourism and Aboriginal tourism initiatives should be encouraged;
- According to a few individuals, greater emphasis is needed to promote low-impact recreational activities (e.g., self-propelled recreation) and traditional camping practices in order to limit destructive activities and prevent user conflicts. It was noted that recreation activities should be compatible with adjacent land uses, such as ranching operations;
- A few respondents believed that conservation values (e.g., habitat protection, biodiversity, ecosystem health, endangered species, air and water resources, riparian areas and carrying capacity) should take precedence in management decisions over various land uses;
- Some indicated that integration between government departments would improve recreational management on public lands;
- A few individuals suggested that public lands should be privatized, as this creates pride in ownership and will facilitate stewardship over land uses. However, others opposed this view and did not want to see public lands privatized. A few respondents urged for stakeholder and public consultation with regard to decisions over privatization; and
- Regarding industry activities (e.g., forestry, oil and gas, etc.), a few individuals opposed forest clear cutting, called for greater water consumption practices (e.g., energy sector) and supported timely reclamation of industry sites with native species. Some urged for the prohibition or limitation of industry and commercial development (e.g., ski hills and golf courses) on public lands.

Provide guidance and signage regarding access to public lands

- According to a few respondents, additional signage from landholders and landowners would be helpful to clearly identify the type and location of land uses permitted on those lands. Signage could be posted along fences or at gateways. It was noted that the designation of particular uses should be clearly communicated to the public; and
- Sensitive areas, such as riparian zones, should be fenced off to prevent access in order to preserve the ecological integrity. One individual suggested that boundaries and fences should also demarcate motorized vehicle-use zones.

Increase public education

- A few supported public education through courses and training programs that address best practices and guidelines for recreational land use. These programs would bring awareness to activities that result in negative impacts and promote proper etiquette and ethical recreational behaviours;
- Some said rules and regulations of conduct need to be clearly communicated to the public; and
- A few individuals mentioned that it would be beneficial to have educational materials (e.g., maps, brochures, signage and interpretive signs) and conservation staff onsite.

Include local stakeholders in public land management

- A few respondents supported the active inclusion and empowerment of local stakeholders (e.g., tour operators, municipalities, landowners, leaseholders, youth organizations, academics, non-government organizations, not-for-profit, clubs, volunteers, user groups) to provide input on management plans, design trail networks, run facilities and protect natural resources.

Section 6: Final Comments

6a. The final question provided workbook participants with an opportunity to reflect on the entire workbook and emphasize their last key messages and recommendations to the GoA.

A total of 365 respondents answered this question, addressing a broad range of topics. Many commented on the planning and consultation processes, environmental protection, water and watershed and the need to find an appropriate balance in land management. Access, agriculture, tools and incentives for land management, private lands and growth were also mentioned. As well, there were a number of other comments including cumulative effects, recreation, climate change, growth and the role/performance of the GoA.

In the following section, respondents' final comments are summarized by key themes and presented in order of frequency of mention.



Plan development and implementation

- Many respondents urged the government to set priorities, make tough decisions, develop the plan and implement it. A few were concerned that previous plans had not been implemented, and urged the government to move forward, while others cautioned against moving too quickly;
- Some participants emphasized that the government must have the political will to keep moving forward with the plan development and implementation. Similarly, a few mentioned that the plan must have teeth so that it can be implemented;
- Of those who commented about the need for a plan, more saw the necessity than questioned the need; and
- There were a few comments about the importance of collaboration in developing the plan, including balanced involvement of various industries, interests and rural/urban perspectives. As well, a few emphasized the need for aligning and/or interfacing with other plans (e.g., Calgary Regional Partnership, local planning processes and county initiatives).

Consultation process for plan

- Many respondents appreciated the opportunity to be involved in the planning process. A few stated that more consultation approaches and opportunities are needed, such as town hall meetings, speaker series and curricula for students. There was a request for consultation about the draft plan and a suggestion that consultation be province-wide; and
- A few respondents wondered about which stakeholder opinions should be considered in the consultation process. Most frequently they said that the views of local communities and residents should be heeded, however there were also mentions about the involvement of industry and environmental sectors.

Environmental protection

- Respondents stated the need to protect the environment, and specifically mentioned the importance of protecting biodiversity, habitat, wild areas, landscapes, wildlife and watersheds. Since there were many comments about water, this topic is summarized in a separate section;
- Respondents were concerned about environmental degradation within the region, and emphasized the need for the government to take quick action to protect the environment and prevent further environmental damage. Specific mention was made of the Eastern Slopes, the Prairies, the Crown of the Continent and Ross Creek;
- Industrial and economic development, population growth and recreational use were identified as environmental threats. A few participants commented that environmental protection would help ensure tourism, recreational and agricultural opportunities;
- A few suggested protecting natural eco-regions and developing a network of these areas. It was also stated that this could help protect the environment and economic values of the land; and

- Some respondents suggested that more regulations and enforcement are needed to protect the environment from development and some recreational uses. Others thought that developing an attitude of environmental stewardship would help with environmental protection.

Water and wetlands

- Of the comments about water, many pertained to the need for protecting and conserving water (i.e., surface and groundwater). Respondents said water was important for aquatic ecosystems, industry (i.e., agriculture, forestry, oil and tourism) and personal use;
- A few respondents emphasized the need to protect wetlands and asked for a wetland policy and/or regulation. As well, there were concerns that wetlands are being lost and that setbacks are not being followed; and
- There were comments about water management practices including the need for revised legislation, reconsideration of water permits, more use of technological advances and scientific data, water monitoring and water storage.

Access

- Of those who commented on access, many supported opening access for recreation and industry (e.g., energy transmission) purposes. Those who suggested access restrictions focused on environmental protection;
- There were a few comments concerning off-highway vehicles, most of which supported access for these purposes. Some suggested designated areas, sustainable trail networks, fees and enforcement as means of managing this use; and
- In discussing access, a few respondents identified specific areas to maintain or ensure access, such as the Crowsnest area, the Ghost Valley, Crown-owned lands (through leaseholders), backcountry and park areas. There was a request to restrict access to the Eastern Slopes and the foothills to allow reclamation of damaged areas.

Finding the balance

- Respondents mentioned the importance of finding balance in the plan, although there were differences in perceptions of the factors to be balanced. Most frequently raised was the need to balance environmental and economic considerations, although social needs were also discussed; and
- A few participants wrote about the need to consider both urban and rural needs as well as the public good and private ownership.



Agriculture

- Many respondents referenced the need to protect agricultural lands and the industry. As well, it was suggested that agriculture plays a role in protection of the environment and Alberta's heritage;
- A few people were concerned about restrictions on the subdivision of farmland; and
- Some participants said that the planning process has not given enough profile to agriculture.

Tools for land management

- Many participants commented on enforcement, with more supporting it than expressing concerns about it. Respondents mentioned enforcement of existing regulations, management plans and environmental violations;
- Some respondents supported incentives for private landowners such as easements, transferrable development credits and land trusts; and
- A few participants suggested user fees primarily as a way to control access.

Private lands and property rights

- Most of the responses about this topic emphasized that private landowners should have control over the use of their land. There were concerns about the government taking away private land and suggestions that the market, not the government, should determine the value of private land; and
- Respondents stressed that if government wants private land there must be negotiation and fair compensation.

Other comments

Other final comments received with less frequency included:

- Ensure aboriginal communities are included in the SSRP process;
- Climate change will have a significant impact on the region in the future;
- The SSRP should be based on the principles of cumulative effects management whereby scenarios are based on models of maximum landscape disturbance;
- Wind energy can strengthen the declining rural economies by bringing jobs, investment and infrastructure to southern Alberta;
- The SSRP should concentrate on stabilizing the economy and the population;
- Managers of public property should be penalized for non-compliance;
- Manufacturing and technology should be considered as emerging sectors in the SSR; and
- Proposed restrictions in the Castle area discriminate against the majority of uses.

Appendix I: Frequency Response Tables

1a. Respondents were asked to offer their opinion regarding priorities for the SSRP by ranking, from highest to lowest priority, the seven statements provided.

Response Option	Frequency
Strong economic development	884
Increased protection of ground water	928
Increased protection of surface water	933
Improved air quality	892
Greater conservation of ecologically sensitive areas	916
Reduction in the loss of agricultural lands	900
Increased recreation opportunities	897
Other	384
Total	6,734

3a. Respondents were asked to indicate which of the three statements provided most accurately reflects their opinion regarding the balance between public benefits and private property rights.

	Agriculture	Energy Production	Forestry	Tourism and Recreation
Not at all important	14	37	76	13
Somewhat unimportant	36	60	109	45
Neither important nor unimportant	45	77	160	70
Somewhat important	213	326	295	261
Very important	464	264	116	385
Don't know	0	0	0	0
Total	772	764	756	774



3b. Workbook respondents were invited to provide written comment regarding the balance between public benefits and private property rights.

The balance between public benefits and private property rights should be...	
Response Option	Frequency
...maintained as it is currently	255
...shifted toward greater public benefits	330
...shifted toward greater private property rights	152
Total	737

Appendix II: SSRP Workbook Instrument



The Government of Alberta Wants Your Input
on the
South Saskatchewan Regional Plan
(A Regional Plan For Southern Alberta)

This workbook is available on-line at :
www.landuse.alberta.ca or
<http://www.ssrpfeedback.com>

Deadline for submitting the SSRP workbook is January 15, 2010.

Please return this workbook by fax to (403) 249-8983
before January 15, 2010.

or mail to: SSRP Feedback
221, 2451 Dieppe Avenue S.W.
Calgary, AB T3E 7K1

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (A Regional Plan For Southern Alberta) PHASE I FEEDBACK

Alberta's Land-use Framework (LUF) sets out the new approach for managing public land and providing conservation incentives for private land to achieve Alberta's long-term economic, environmental and social goals. The purpose of the LUF is to manage growth, not stop it, and to sustain our growing economy, while balancing this with Albertans' social and environmental goals. This is what the Land-use Framework is about - smart growth. The LUF stipulates seven regional plans will be developed across Alberta.

The Alberta government's Land Use Secretariat (LUS) will oversee the development of each regional plan. LUS will provide policy analysis, research and administrative support to the Regional Advisory Council (RAC). The LUF identified the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP) as an immediate priority. In May 2009, the Government of Alberta (GoA) appointed a RAC for the South Saskatchewan Region (SSR). The RAC has been asked by the GoA to explore the relationship between conservation and development and provide advice on how trade-offs may be reflected in the SSRP.

The SSR, located in southern Alberta, is incredibly diverse. Its landscapes include grassland, parkland, foothills, and Rocky Mountains. The economy of the SSR is also diverse and the region's major economic activities are agriculture, energy production, forestry, and tourism and recreation. The SSR is also one of the most populated areas in Alberta. It is home to 45 per cent of Alberta's population and contains our largest city, Calgary. The region also includes seven First Nations communities, whose reserves were established through the 1877 treaty process known as Treaty 7.

The Alberta government will consider input on the draft SSRP through three phases of public, stakeholder and Aboriginal consultations. This is the first phase of this process.

Privacy statement: The information collected through this workbook, including your opinions, is collected under the authority of Section 33(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) Act. It will be used by the Government of Alberta in identifying issues and options for the future of land use in Alberta.

If you have any questions about the collection or use of this information, please contact the Consultation Manager, Land Use Secretariat, 10035 - 108 Street, Edmonton AB, T5J 3E1 or by telephone at 780-422-4871.

PURPOSE FOR THE FEEDBACK

In this first of three phases of public information and input related to the development of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP), the GoA is seeking Albertans' input on the questions being asked in the terms of reference (ToR) . Your views will provide important input to both the RAC and the LUS for developing the SSRP.

1 CHALLENGES TO DEVELOPING THE SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN REGIONAL PLAN

1A. In your opinion, what should the priorities be for the SSRP? Please rank from the highest priority (1) to the lowest priority. If you have other priorities that are not identified in the following list, please add them in the blank spaces and then rank them.

- Strong **economic development**
- Increased protection of **surface water**
- Increased protection of **ground water**
- Improved **air quality**
- Greater **conservation** of ecologically sensitive areas
- Reduction in the loss of **agricultural lands**
- Increased **recreation opportunities**
- Other priorities** _____
- Other priorities** _____

Comments

2 SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN ECONOMIC GROWTH

The economy of the South Saskatchewan Region is diverse, and economic development varies across the region. The region’s major economic activities are agriculture, energy production, forestry, and tourism and recreation. Economic growth in the region is important for sustaining local employment and the strength of local communities. Resource development in the region also contributes significant revenues to the province, helping fund important programs and services for Albertans.

2.1 After reading Pages 16 to 21 of the SSRP terms of reference, how important do you feel each of the following are to sustaining economic growth in the South Saskatchewan Region? Please rate your answers on a scale from not at all important to very important.

	Not at all important	Somewhat unimportant	Neither important nor unimportant	Somewhat important	Very important	Don't know
Agriculture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Energy production	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Forestry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tourism and recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2.2 For each of the major economic activities within the South Saskatchewan Region, please identify what you believe will ensure their success into the future.

Agriculture

Energy production

Forestry

Tourism and recreation

2.3 Are there any other sectors that you feel may emerge in the future that will be important to the region?

3 BALANCE BETWEEN PUBLIC BENEFITS AND PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

In your opinion, should the balance between public benefits and private property rights be (choose one only)

- maintained as it is currently
- shifted toward greater public benefits
- shifted toward greater private property rights

Comments:

4 LANDS TO BE CONSERVED

4A. In your opinion, what are the three most important landscapes (e.g. physical areas or features) in the South Saskatchewan Region that should be considered for conservation?

Landscape 1: _____

Based on the criteria outlined in the SSRP terms of reference*, why do you think this landscape should be conserved? (Select all that apply)

- area permits the function of ecological processes (e.g., riparian zones, native prairies, forests)
- area supports the desired biological diversity in the region (e.g., landforms, species, vegetation) including important wildlife habitat and areas that enable movement of wildlife populations
- landscape provides visual value
- landscape provides cultural value
- landscape provides economic value
- area is of sufficient size
- area provides landscape connectivity
- area has little or no industrial activity
- area supports Aboriginal traditional land uses
- other _____

*Available at www.landuse.alberta.ca

Landscape 2: _____

Based on the criteria outlined in the SSRP terms of reference, why do you think this landscape should be conserved? (Select all that apply)

- area permits the function of ecological processes (e.g., riparian zones, native prairies, forests)
- area supports the desired biological diversity in the region (e.g., landforms, species, vegetation) including important wildlife habitat and areas that enable movement of wildlife populations
- landscape provides visual value
- landscape provides cultural value
- landscape provides economic value
- area is of sufficient size
- area provides landscape connectivity
- area has little or no industrial activity
- area supports Aboriginal traditional land uses
- other _____

Landscape 3: _____

Based on the criteria outlined in the SSRP terms of reference, why do you think this landscape should be conserved? (Select all that apply)

- area permits the function of ecological processes (e.g., riparian zones, native prairies, forests)
- area supports the desired biological diversity in the region (e.g., landforms, species, vegetation) including important wildlife habitat and areas that enable movement of wildlife populations
- landscape provides visual value
- landscape provides cultural value
- landscape provides economic value
- area is of sufficient size
- area provides landscape connectivity
- area has little or no industrial activity
- area supports Aboriginal traditional land uses
- other _____

5

HIGH VALUE TOURISM AND RECREATION LANDS

5A. Understanding that the Eastern Slopes and Badlands are already recognized as significant recreation and tourism destinations, identify two other regionally significant areas or features that should be considered high value tourism and recreation locations.

Location 1 : _____

Why should it be considered a high value regional tourism and recreation area or feature?

Location 2 : _____

Why should it be considered a high value regional tourism and recreation area or feature?

5B. What advice would you provide the GoA to maintain the integrity of high value regional recreation and tourism lands in the SSR?
