



**AGENDA**  
**Smoky Lake County**  
**Committee of the Whole Meeting**  
for the purpose of **Planning**  
**Monday, June 19, 2023, at 10:00 A.M.**

To be held in Council Chambers and virtually through Telus Business Connect Video Meeting.  
Please join using this link: <https://video.businessconnect.telus.com/join/984639926>  
Meeting ID: 984639926 or by phone: +1 (780) 6662345 Canada (Edmonton)

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- 1. **Meeting:** Call to Order
- 2. **Agenda:** Acceptance of Agenda: as presented or subject to additions or deletions
- 3. **Issues for Information:**
  - 3.4 Commercial Fish Farm Opportunity at **10:05-10:30am. (executive session)**
  - 3.5 Update on the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and Municipal Development Plan (MDP) Bylaw Refresh Project. ©
  - 3.6 Draft Kisiskaciwanisipi North Saskatchewan Heritage River Concept Plan. ©
  - 3.7 Applied Land Use Planning (ALUP) Program and Brownlee LLP Planning and Development Law: Current Trends, Issues and Updates, May 17, 2023: Slide Deck. ©
  - 3.8 Community Planning Association of Alberta (CPAA) Conference in Leduc County, May 1-3, 2023: Slide Decks - Innovative Land Use Bylaws Panel. ©
- 4. **Delegation:**
  - 4.4 Andy Popko, Larry Dalton, Amy Cherniwchan, and Juanita Marois in relation to items 3.1 and 6.1 @ 10:05-10:30am.
- 5. **Executive Session:**
  - 5.4 FOIP Section 16 (*business interests of a third party*) and Section 25 (*economic and other interests of a public body*), in relation to items 3.1 and 5.1.

**Adjournment**

*Note: once the Committee of the Whole for Planning has been completed and adjourned in the morning, we will reconvene in the afternoon for Government Liaison Committee at 1pm.*



# Issue for Information

**Meeting Date:** Monday, June 19, 2023

**Topic:** Update on the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and Municipal Development Plan (MDP) Refresh

**Presented By:** Planning & Development Services

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**Recommendation:** That Smoky Lake County Committee of the Whole **RECOMMEND to Council to accept the Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Development Plan Update and adopt the adjusted Project Charter.**

## Background:

- The Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Development Plan are two of Council's most important tools for guiding planning and economic development.
  - Best practice is generally considered to be a review and possibly renew the Land Use Bylaw every five years, and the Municipal Development Plan, every ten years. This is to remain modern and adaptable to emerging trends, technologies, Uses, etc.
  - Updating these documents *can* be one of the most important undertakings that a Council completes during its term.
- The current Smoky Lake County Land Use Bylaw was adopted in 2014 (and has been amended twelve (12) times so far), and the current Municipal Development Plan was adopted in 2012 (and has been amended five (5) times so far).
- At the December 16, 2022, Meeting of Committee of the Whole for Planning received the Project Charter '*Five Small Big Ideas*' to update these documents.
- In early 2023, many Albertans became **very** interested in the land use planning process. Smoky Lake County remains committed to providing regular updates to the public and inviting public participation in this process. Ultimately, Council is the decision-maker on any proposed changes or new planning Bylaws.
- In late March 2023, Smoky Lake County learned that it had been **refused** for the Regional Environmental Sensitivity and Agricultural Suitability Study under the Alberta Community Partnership (ACP).
- Since this funding has not become available, the Administration will instead rely on in-house resources, for example, to update maps, graphics, etc.



# Issue for Information

- In early May 2023, most of County Council attended the Community Planning Association of Alberta (CPAA) in Leduc County, heard the 'Innovative Land Use Bylaws' panel which provided some helpful suggestions on best practices, etc.
- **Smoky Lake County remains on-track to provide a revised Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Development Plan Bylaw for consideration of First Reading in late Q4-2023.**

**Benefits:** Modern planning documents for competitive and fair economic development.

**Disadvantages:** Staff time.

**Alternatives:** Committee may defer a recommendation.

**Financial Implications:** Besides staff time, there are no anticipated direct financial implications.

**Legislation:** Part 17, Municipal Government Act, M-26 RSA 2000

**Intergovernmental:** Nil.

**Strategic Alignment:** Proactivity in Development.

**Enclosure(s):**

- **Revision 2 Adjusted Project Charter: 'Five Small Big Ideas' © Attachment 1**
- **LUB/MDP FAQ prepared by MPS, Spring 2023 © Attachment 1**



## Project Charter: Five Small **'Big Ideas'**:

Date: June 19, 2023

# 'Principles to Underpin a New Land Use Bylaw (LUB) & Municipal Development Plan (MDP) Bylaw for Smoky Lake County'

1) Modernized of the 'front-end' or administrative matters.  
i.e., updates under:

- *Modernized Municipal Government Act (MMGA 'The Act', 2017)*
- *Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2021).*
  - Changes to the avenues of appeal (Land and Property Rights Tribunal (LPRT)).
  - Changes to permit processing timelines.

2) Easy-to-understand.

- Simplify jargon, terminology, & definitions.
- New definitions added, dealing with new and emerging Uses.
- Remove of confusing or redundant definitions and eliminate definitions that are not referenced elsewhere

3) Updated & User-friendly Maps and Graphics.

- An image is worth a thousand words.
- GIS has advanced *massively* since 2012
- Improve user accessibility and understanding.

4) Indigenous Engagement & Relationship Building.

- Requirement under the MGA to **notify adjacent** Indigenous communities (First Nations and Metis Settlements) when adopting a new LUB/MPC (S. 636(1)) ...**we have opportunity to go further.**
  - **Recommendation:** *That the Reeve send letters now, to the Chairpersons and Chiefs, to invite engagement with Buffalo Lake and Kikino Metis Settlements, and Whitefish (Goodfish) FN and Saddle Lake FN.*

5) Land Use Districts informed by data & rational.



- Recreation & Tourism District
- Crown & Grazing Lease District
- Water & Stormwater
  - North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Riparian Setback Calculator. [has not progressed]
  - 2020 ACP Regional Stormwater Study.
  - 2022 Beaver River and 2012 North Saskatchewan River Integrated Watershed Management Plans (IWMPs).
- Possibility for consideration of MDP Subdivision Regulations based on soil quality, etc.

Other Notes:

- Funded: 2023 Waskatenau Creek Connectivity Study
- Refused: 2023 Agricultural Suitability and Environmental Sensitivity Study

UPDATED Timeline:

- First Reading in November 2023.
- Public Engagement on draft bylaws, beginning Q4-2023 into Q1-2024.
- Consideration of Second and Third Reading, middle of Q1-2024.
- Mid-2024 or beyond: establish any new, or review & update various existing Area Structure Plans.
- Other ongoing projects: Lake Trails Strategy



## Key parts of the Act:

See weblink: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/m26>

### Municipal development plans

632(1) Every council of a municipality must by bylaw adopt a municipal development plan.

(2) Repealed 2016 c24 s98.

(2.1) Within 3 years after the coming into force of this subsection, a council of a municipality that does not have a municipal development plan must by bylaw adopt a municipal development plan.

(3) A municipal development plan

(a) must address

(i) the future land use within the municipality,

(ii) the manner of and the proposals for future development in the municipality,

(iii) the co-ordination of land use, future growth patterns and other infrastructure with adjacent municipalities if there is no intermunicipal development plan with respect to those matters in those municipalities,

(iv) the provision of the required transportation systems either generally or specifically within the municipality and in relation to adjacent municipalities, and

(v) the provision of municipal services and facilities either generally or specifically,

(b) may address

(i) proposals for the financing and programming of municipal infrastructure,

(ii) the co-ordination of municipal programs relating to the physical, social and economic development of the municipality,

(iii) environmental matters within the municipality,

(iv) the financial resources of the municipality,

(v) the economic development of the municipality, and

(vi) any other matter relating to the physical, social or economic development of the municipality,

(c) may contain statements regarding the municipality's development constraints, including the results of any development studies and impact analysis, and goals, objectives, targets, planning policies and corporate strategies,

(d) must contain policies compatible with the subdivision and development regulations to provide guidance on the type and location of land uses adjacent to sour gas facilities,

(e) must contain policies respecting the provision of municipal, school or municipal and school reserves, including but not limited to the need for, amount



of and allocation of those reserves and the identification of school requirements in consultation with affected school boards,

(f) must contain policies respecting the protection of agricultural operations, and

(g) may contain policies respecting the provision of conservation reserve in accordance with section 664.2(1)(a) to (d).

(4) Repealed 2020 c39 s10(19). RSA 2000 cM-26 s632;RSA 2000 c21(Supp) s4;2008 c37 s11;

**2015 c8 s62;2016 c24 s98;2017 c13 s2(16);2020 c39 s10(19)**

#### **Land use bylaw**

640(1) Every municipality must pass a land use bylaw.

(1.1) A land use bylaw may prohibit or regulate and control the use and development of land and buildings in a municipality, including, without limitation, by

(a) imposing design standards,

(b) determining population density,

(c) regulating the development of buildings,

(d) providing for the protection of agricultural land, and

(e) providing for any other matter council considers necessary to regulate land use within the municipality.

(2) A land use bylaw

(a) must divide the municipality into districts of the number and area the council considers appropriate;

(b) must, unless the district is designated as a direct control district pursuant to section 641, prescribe with respect to each district,

(i) the one or more uses of land or buildings that are permitted in the district, with or without conditions, or

(ii) the one or more uses of land or buildings that may be permitted in the district at the discretion of the development authority, with or without conditions,

or both;

(c) must establish a method of making decisions on applications for development permits and issuing development permits for any development, including provision for

(i) the types of development permit that may be issued,

(ii) applying for a development permit,

(iii) processing an application for, or issuing, cancelling, suspending or refusing to issue, a development permit,

(iv) the conditions that are to be attached, or that the development authority may attach, to a development permit, either generally or with respect to a specific type of permit,

(v) how long any type of development permit remains in effect,



(vi) the discretion that the development authority may exercise with respect to development permits, and

(vii) any other matters necessary to regulate and control the issue of development permits that to the council appear necessary;

(d) must provide for how and to whom notice of the issuance of a development permit is to be given;

(e) must establish the number of dwelling units permitted on a parcel of land.

(3) A land use bylaw may identify additional land as adjacent land for the purpose of notification under sections 653, 679, 680 and 692.

(4) Repealed 2020 c39 s10(28).

(5) A land use bylaw may provide that when an application for a development permit or change in land use designation is refused another application with respect to the same lot

(a) for a development permit for the same or a similar use, or

(b) for a change in land use designation may not be made by the same or any other applicant until the time stated in the land use bylaw has expired.

(6) A land use bylaw may authorize a development authority to decide on an application for a development permit even though the proposed development does not comply with the land use bylaw or is a non-conforming building if, in the opinion of the development authority,

(a) the proposed development would not

(i) unduly interfere with the amenities of the neighbourhood, or

(ii) materially interfere with or affect the use, enjoyment or value of neighbouring parcels of land, and

(b) the proposed development conforms with the use prescribed for that land or building in the land use bylaw.

(7) A land use bylaw must be consistent with the applicable requirements of the regulations under the Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act respecting the location of premises described in a cannabis licence and distances between those premises and other premises.

(8) Despite this section or any other provision of this Act, the authority to pass a land use bylaw does not include the authority to pass a bylaw in respect of the use of a building or part of a building for residential purposes that has the effect of distinguishing between any individuals on the basis of whether they are related or unrelated to each other.

(9) The Minister may by order direct a municipality to amend its land use bylaw in respect of the use of a building or part of a building for residential purposes if the land use bylaw has the effect of distinguishing between senior citizens on the basis of whether they are related or unrelated to each other.

**RSA 2000 cM-26 s640;2016 c24 s100;2017 c21 s28;  
2020 c39 s10(28) 640.1 Repealed 2020 c39 s10(29).**

### **Statutory plan preparation**

636(1) While preparing a statutory plan, a municipality must notify the following and provide a means for suggestions and representations to be made:





- (a) any members of the public who may be affected by the plan;
  - (b) the school boards with jurisdiction in the area to which the plan preparation applies;
  - (c) in the case of a municipal development plan,
    - (i) any adjacent municipalities,
    - (ii) the Indian band of any adjacent Indian reserve, and
    - (iii) any adjacent Metis settlement;
  - (d) in the case of an area structure plan,
    - (i) where the land that is the subject of the plan is adjacent to another municipality, that municipality,
    - (ii) where the land that is the subject of the plan is within 1.6 kilometres of a provincial highway, the Minister responsible for the Highways Development and Protection Act, and
    - (iii) where the land that is the subject of the plan is adjacent to an Indian reserve or Metis settlement, the Indian band or Metis settlement.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply to amendments to statutory plans.

**RSA 2000 cM-26 s636;2008 c37 s11;2017 c13 s1(57);**

**2020 c39 s10(22)**

-end of document-



# Issue for Information

**Meeting Date:** Wednesday, July 19, 2023

**Topic:** Draft Kisiskaciwanisipi North Saskatchewan Heritage River Concept Plan

**Presented By:** Kyle Schole, Project Lead, Planning Technician Planning & Development Services

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**Recommendation(s):** That Smoky Lake County Committee of the Whole **RECOMMEND** to Council to:

1. Accept the draft kisiskaciwanisipi North Saskatchewan Heritage River Concept Plan as prepared by O2 Planning & Design Inc., for information,
2. Provide the same to the various municipal and non-municipal partners for further opportunity to comment, and
3. Submit the same through Alberta Environment and Protected Areas to the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board (CHRB) and Technical Committee for consideration at its Annual General Meeting currently slated for September 2023.

## Background:

### Heritage River Concept Plan

This non-binding and non-statutory document will ultimately fulfil the remaining last step for recognition under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.

The Plan outlines various actions for various sectors/groups to steward the river's exceptional cultural, recreational, and natural or bio-physical values and features.

### Engagement & What We Heard

Project Engagement launched in September 2022, culminating in several What We Heard Reports (*Public, Indigenous, Tourism, and Heritage*). An intermunicipal Advisory Committee has met several times along the way to provide advice and input to this process.

Generally, there was an extremely high level of interest and public support in seeing the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta recognized under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS). However, some concern or hesitancy has been expressed/heard in terms of the risk of federal incursion into provincial jurisdiction or private land ownership rights resulting from designation.

### North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA): Core Partner/ River Manager

Since 2021, the NSWA has been assisting Smoky Lake County and the project team on the Nomination, and more recently in completing the Heritage River Concept Plan. The NSWA Board enjoys multi-sectoral and interjurisdictional perspectives. NSWA staff also enjoy substantial subject-matter expertise and resourcing/capacity.



# Issue for Information

On March 29, 2023 - The NSWA Board *approved* the Strategic Planning and Priorities Committee (SPPC)/Executive Committee Recommendations **that the NSWA volunteer to become the River Manager for the North Saskatchewan Heritage River Concept Plan**. This includes taking the lead on annual and ten-year reporting.

However, this partnership does not mean that Smoky Lake County won't continue to be a key partner in this work.

Indeed, the County is partnering with the University of Alberta and the NSWA to implement an opportunity to hire Indigenous summer students under Alberta Environment and Protected Areas Amended/Extended Grant Agreement 23GRRSD45.

## Parks Canada: Ecological Corridors, National Urban Park

Smoky Lake County has been contributing to the Pre-Feasibility Study for the City of Edmonton's National Urban Park (NUP) Initiative Stakeholder Committee since April 2022.

The NUP Pre-Feasibility Study is set to wrap up by Q3 2023, with Park Planning and Establishment by 2025. While no final site selection decisions have yet been made, the NUP **could** include portions of the Edmonton River Valley.

In March 2023, Administration also met on-on-one with Parks Canada (*Manager of Ecological Corridors and Heritage Rivers, Manager of National Urban Parks, Heritage Rivers Program Assistant*) to explore how the North Sask. Heritage River *could* fit into and compliment the federally led National Urban Park and Ecological Corridors Programs.

## Travel Alberta Tourism Development Zone Plan: NE Lakelands

Smoky Lake County has also been sitting on Travel Alberta's Tourism Development Zone Planning Lakeland Stakeholder Committee since Fall 2022, implementation of which is now well underway.

## **WHAT'S NEXT**

### City of Edmonton and other Municipal Partners

County Administration is returning to the City of Edmonton Urban Planning Committee (UPC) on August 29 to present Report UPE01575 in fulfilment of Mayor Iveson's August 2021 Conditional Letter of Support.

Similarly, County Administration is also returning to the other seventeen partner municipalities in late June, July, and August to provide the Heritage River Concept Plan as information.



# Issue for Information

## Heritage Rivers Board AGM

Administration intends submit the Heritage River Concept Plan via Alberta Environment and Protected Areas to the September 2023 Canadian Heritage Rivers Board Annual General Meeting. Once the Board endorses the document, it will be recommended to the respective Alberta Minister, and then Canadian Minister before being announced, likely in 2024.

## Commemorative Plaque Unveiling at River Lot 10

Upon the designation being announced, a commemorative plaque is to be installed. A plaque text is currently being refined, which will be provided in English, French, Ukrainian, Cree, and Blackfoot.

Costs for procurement of the plaque itself are covered by Parks Canada (~\$6,000), and some site prep is required by the County. The Town of Smoky Lake has also contributed an in-kind donation of sandstone.

## HISTORY:

The Canadian Heritage Rivers System was established in 1984, and Alberta joined the CHRS in 1994.

The North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) began the early work toward achieving heritage river status in the early 2000s, which culminated in a Background Study being completed in 2005. However, the project then languished for several years.

In October 2019, Smoky Lake County began to lobby and attempt to kick-start the project (Motion 111-19) in-part, due to alignment with the Victoria District Economic Development Strategy, and to inspire development of ecological, cultural, and heritage tourism opportunities.

In October 2020, then-Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) Jason Nixon endorsed the project.

In April 2021, a motion carried at Edmonton City Council provided a **\*conditional\*** Letter of Support, with questions on governance and finance, which was obtained in August of that year.

In November 2021, the **Nomination Document** was filed with the Heritage Rivers Board, supported by more than 70 community partners across Alberta, which recommended endorsement to the respective Ministers.

In March 2022, Smoky Lake County struck a municipal steering committee (Motion 505-22) and entered a Memorandum of Understanding (Motion 506-22) with the North



# Issue for Information

Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) to collaborate on a **Heritage River Concept Plan**, to complete the designation. Also in March 2022, the Village of Vilna secured a \$200k Alberta Community Partnership (ACP) Grant, further to this work.

In early April 2022, Smoky Lake County learned that Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) Minister Jason Nixon had signed the Nomination Document and had sent it onto the federal minister for consideration.

In May 2022, the County selected O2 Planning & Design Inc. (Motion 718-22) to complete an 'Heritage River Concept Plan.' This work has been funded by several grants and in-kind support, totaling more than \$283k, and the Project Charter was approved by County Council (Motion 945-22) on August 25, 2022.

On August 3, 2022, the **NSR (Alberta) Nomination** was successfully announced by both Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) Minister Guilbeault and Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) Minister Issik.

**Benefits:** Including but not limited to:

- Alignment with regional initiatives.
- Natural, land, and river-based tourism development opportunities.
- Enhanced community participation, awareness, pride, and place-making.
- Opportunities for the unlocking of additional grants, etc. (such as Watershed Resiliency, Community Facility Enhancement, etc.)

**Disadvantages:** Staff time/capacity.

**Alternatives:** None.

**Financial Implications:** Work on this project has been undertaken through several grants to the tune of \$283k, plus staff time.

**Legislation:** Municipal Government Act (Alberta), Parks Canada Agency Act (Canada): Parks Canada Guiding Principles and Operational Policies: Part II - Activity Policies: Canadian Heritage Rivers Policy.

**Intergovernmental:** Collaboration with ~20 municipalities, Alberta Environment and Protected Areas, Environment and Climate Change Canada/Parks Canada, North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance, River Valley Alliance, Travel Alberta, Explore Edmonton, Paddle Alberta, Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations, Metis Nation, and others.

**Strategic Alignment:** Proactivity in Development, Culture, Employment, Education, and Emergency Services.

**Enclosure(s):** **1. Powerpoint Presentation ©**  
**2. North Sask. Heritage River Concept Plan, as prepared by O2 Planning & Design Inc. ©**

# DRAFT Heritage River Designation Concept

## Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy Omaka-ty The North Saskatchewan River (Alberta)

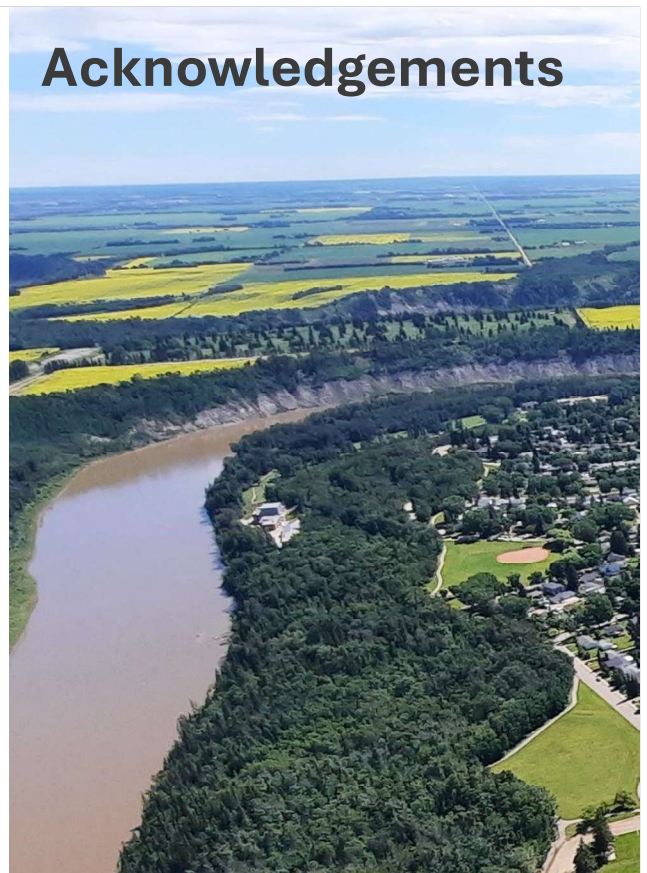
June 2023

Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy

Omaka-ty



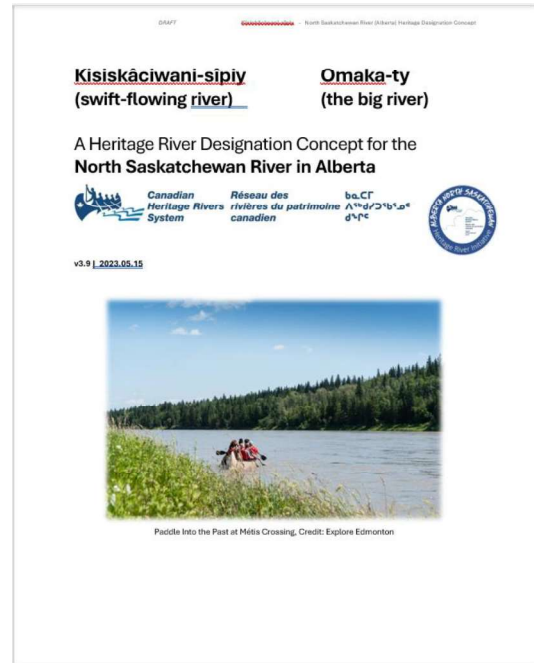
## Acknowledgements





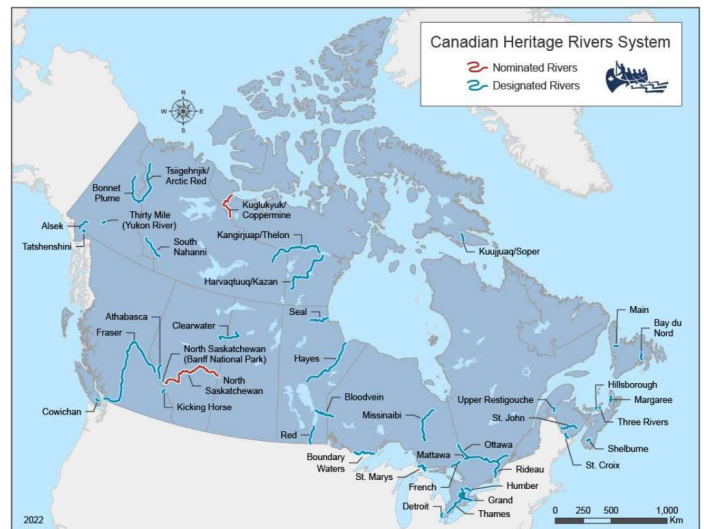
# Presentation Outline

- Project Context & The Canadian Heritage Rivers System
- Engagement Summary
- Key River Heritage Values
- A Heritage Strategy: Vision, Principles, Goals and Actions
- Implementation & Monitoring
- Conclusion & Next Steps



# Context & Summary

- 718 km long river
- Banff National Park → Saskatchewan
- Part of Canada's 2<sup>nd</sup> longest river system (Nelson-Saskatchewan)
- Outstanding heritage values:
  - Indigenous heritage
  - Western heritage
  - Indigenous - European conflict & cooperation
  - Large river in the Boreal Plain & Prairies
  - Proximity to urban populations





# A Long Time Coming



# Engagements

<b>DISCOVER RIVER STORIES</b>	<b>DEVELOP DRAFT PLAN</b>	<b>CELEBRATE PROGRESS &amp; INSPIRE STEWARDSHIP</b>	<b>SUBMISSION TO PROVINCIAL &amp; FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS FOR APPROVAL</b>
FALL/WINTER 2022	SPRING 2023	SUMMER 2023	FALL 2023

## Indigenous

Visited **15** communities  
Engaged **68** participants



## Public

- Online Survey: **28**
- Online Portal & Web Map: **235**
- Public Workshops: **14**
- Discussion Guide: **3**
- Meetings: **6**

## Tourism Industry

- Online Survey: **22**
- Digital Workshop: **9**
- Interviews: **11**







## Indigenous Heritage

- Creation Stories
- A Trade Route
- Ceremonial Sites
- Women & Water
- Plants & Medicines
- Hunting & Fishing

*“The river needs us, and we need the river”*

## Western Canadian Heritage

- The Fur Trade
- Early Expeditions
- Settlement Patterns
- Steamships
- Industrial Heritage
- Regulations & Agreements

**“The Story of this River is the Story of the West”**

-James Gordon, ‘Roll on North Saskatchewan’ chorus

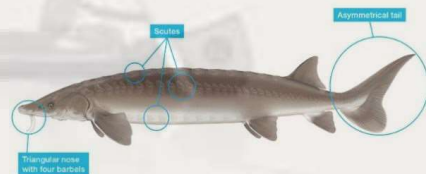


## Recreational Heritage

- Boating
- Fishing & Hunting
- Nature Appreciation
- Dark Skies/Northern Lights
- Cultural Tourism
- Events/Celebration

## Natural Heritage

- Represents the Boreal Plain & Prairies
- Many unique natural features
- Supports rare & threatened species
- Water quality improving in recent decades
- Core habitat for lake sturgeon





# DRAFT Heritage Concept Strategic Framework

## VISION

Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy's diverse heritage values are recognized and stewarded, strengthening thriving communities connected by the river's landscapes and history.



## PRINCIPLES

- Recognition
- Respect
- Reconciliation
- Integrity
- Sustainability
- Voluntary Participation
- Leadership
- Collaboration & Partnerships



## GOALS & ACTIONS

Culture

Recreation/  
Tourism

Nature

Water  
Quality



# DRAFT Cultural Heritage Goals & Actions

**GOAL: Recognize and steward the diverse cultural heritage associated with Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy**

## KEY ACTIONS

Unveil a commemorative historic plaque during a joint public ceremony in Smoky Lake County.

Open [kihcihkaw askî \(Sacred Land\)](#) in Whitemud Park, Edmonton. This site will host spiritual ceremonies, sweat lodges, cultural camps, talking circles, and learning.

Promote, steward, and enhance diverse cultural heritage attractions and interpretive opportunities, linked in a river-wide thematic framework.





## **DRAFT Recreation & Tourism Goals & Actions**

**GOAL: Promote kisiskâciwani-sîpiy as a diverse recreational amenity and destination, compatible with the natural and cultural heritage values of the river.**

### **KEY ACTIONS**

Establish a River Tourism Development Task Force for kisiskâciwani-sîpiy, focused on the core areas of water-based tourism, outdoor adventure tourism, nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, and Indigenous tourism  
Inventory river access points, prioritize key locations, and invest in targeted improvements while ensuring safety

Develop signature/epic multi-day river heritage tours



## **DRAFT Natural Heritage Goals & Actions**

**GOAL: Maintain or improve the natural heritage of kisiskâciwani-sîpiy, including its watershed, greenways, flora, and fauna.**

### **KEY ACTIONS**

Implement the Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) and monitor progress over time  
Update the State of the Watershed Report for the North Saskatchewan River Basin (Alberta)  
Complete the update of lake sturgeon population status throughout the river (GoA, 2023)





# DRAFT Water Quality Goals & Actions

## GOAL: Maintain or improve water quality

### KEY ACTIONS

WaterSHED water quality monitoring program implementation and communications

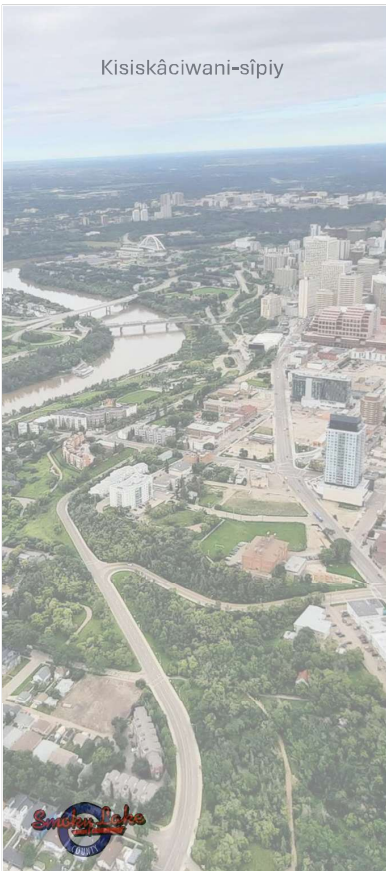
Implement the [Surface Water Quality Framework](#) for the North Saskatchewan basin

Integrate water quality outcomes in the Designated Industrial Zone (DIZ) pilot, Industrial Heartland

Implement the Source Water Protection Plan for Edmonton (EPCOR, 2020)

Implement the Stormwater Integrated Resource Plan (SIRP), including \$1.6 billion of investment

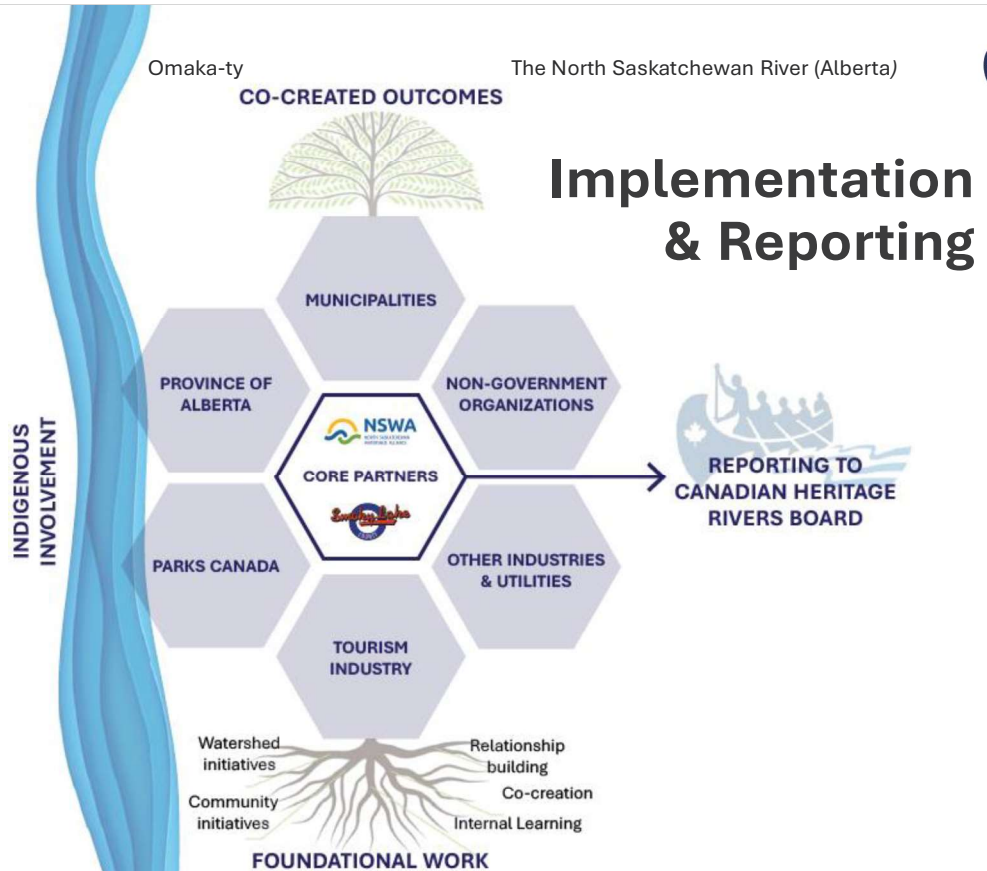
Upgrade wastewater treatment systems at Goldbar to include advanced membrane technologies



Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy

Omaka-ty

The North Saskatchewan River (Alberta)





## Implementation: We Are All Stewards

- All Albertans have a role in river stewardship
- Heritage river designation is commemorative & symbolic *not* prescriptive
- There will be **no** changes to legislation or policies if designation is approved
- The NSWA and provincial and federal governments will **promise / guarantee** designation **will not** and **cannot** create additional red tape or bureaucracy
- **Designation complements stewardship** at all other levels: individual, grassroots, industry, municipal, provincial, Indigenous

**What actions will YOU or your organization take, to experience, conserve, or restore the heritage of Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy?**



02



## Conclusions & Next Steps

- The heritage significance of this river is important & growing
- Designation will support place-based heritage stewardship
- The River connects us to our past & enriches the present
- **It is time for designation as a national Heritage River**
- Plan to proceed with submission to Provincial & Federal governments for approval in **Fall 2023**



02



# Questions?



# Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy (swift-flowing river)

# Omaka-ty (the big river)

## A Heritage River Designation Concept for the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta



Canadian  
Heritage Rivers  
System

Réseau des  
rivières du patrimoine  
canadien

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ᐱᓐᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᑲᓐᑲᑦᑲᑦ  
ᑲᓐᑲᑦ



v4.1 | 2023.06.05



Paddle Into the Past at Métis Crossing, Credit: Explore Edmonton

**Acknowledgements:**



**Land Acknowledgment**

In the spirit of respect and reciprocity, we acknowledge that the lands within the North Saskatchewan River watershed are located in Treaty 6, Treaty 8, and the Métis Homeland. Additionally, Nations from Treaty 7 and beyond also have a traditional and enduring relationship with the North Saskatchewan River. These lands are the traditional territories and gathering places of diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. We recognize the contributions of Indigenous peoples who have cared for this land since time immemorial and whose rich histories, cultures, languages, and presence continue to enrich these sacred lands we all steward as Treaty People.



**Funding Acknowledgements:**

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**Project Consulting Team:**





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## Executive Summary

**Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy (The North Saskatchewan River) in Alberta was nominated as a Canadian heritage river in 2021. This river reflects remarkable historical, cultural, recreational, and natural heritage values. Heritage designation will honour its significance to many Indigenous peoples, Albertans, and Canadians.**

The Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) is a national program that acknowledges the values of heritage rivers across Canada. It supports long-term stewardship of river values for the benefit and enjoyment of Canadians. The CHRS tells our rivers' stories - the stories of Canada - including its rich Indigenous histories. This story is about the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta – also known as kisiskâciwani-sîpiy ('swift-flowing river') in Cree and omaka-ty ('the big river') in Blackfoot.

To achieve designation, the CHRS requires proponents to submit a Designation report. This Heritage River Designation Concept is centered around an action-oriented strategy that links a vision, principles, goals, and actions. The intent is for this strategic, integrated blueprint to function for years to come, fostering greater recognition, stewardship, and promotion of the heritage of this timeless river.

Diverse, dynamic heritage values are embodied in Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy, which deeply influence the identity, culture, and sense of place for many First Nations and Métis, Albertans, and Canadians. The River played a critical role in the fur trade for centuries, and strongly influenced settlement patterns, land use, and architecture. The cultural, recreational, and natural values of this river fill many strategic gaps in the national heritage rivers system. These include geographic gaps in the Prairies and Boreal Plain, and thematic gaps related to Indigenous-European conflict & cooperation, agriculture, and proximity to urban populations.

The heritage integrity of the river is remarkably intact and showing improving trends in recent decades. Water quality improvements, and a dramatic recent recovery of lake sturgeon populations has been observed in recent years. The number of people with easy access to the river to appreciate its heritage is also increasing rapidly, due to strong population growth in the Edmonton region, as well as the rebounding tourism industry. Although vulnerable to degradation, many remain hopeful that with collaborative stewardship, the river's conditions and associated heritage values can be improved further for future generations.

Ultimately, this report finds the heritage values of the North Saskatchewan River largely intact and growing in importance. There remains strong support for designation among Indigenous communities, the provincial government, municipalities, industry, landowners, and the public. Their collective efforts - guided by this strategic blueprint - will help strengthen and maintain the river's heritage values over time, in a more integrated, action-oriented fashion to achieve the vision that: ***“Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy's diverse heritage values are recognized and stewarded, strengthening thriving communities connected by the river's landscapes and history.”***

The North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) will act as the lead agency reporting to the CHRS in the future. They will collaborate and gather input from many grassroots non-government organizations, municipalities including Smoky Lake County, Indigenous peoples, industries, and governments on this journey as it unfolds. **In conclusion, it is time for the North Saskatchewan River (Alberta) to be designated as a nationally significant Heritage River under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.**

**What actions will YOU or your organization take, to experience, conserve, or restore the heritage of Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy?**

---

# 1 Introduction and Background

The introductory section of this report summarizes the Canadian Heritage Rivers System, its role in Alberta, the purpose of this Heritage Designation Concept, project background, and summary of engagement results.

## 1.1 Foreword

**Will update below prior to finalization:**

***“A heritage river designation would reflect the care and stewardship that local governments and stakeholders have undertaken along the river corridor, and help local municipalities and businesses promote the natural beauty, rich cultural history and myriad recreation and tourism opportunities in your region.” - The Honourable Jason Nixon, Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks, October 2021***

*“For millennia, rivers have been the meeting places, travel routes and trade corridors that stitched this continent together. Canadian Heritage Rivers offer Canadians and visitors a chance to experience great waterways, learn about our shared history, and share in the stewardship of these incredible places. By approving the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System, the Government of Canada recognizes its tremendous value, culturally, historically and recreationally.”*  
**- The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, August 2022**

*“The North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance is a collaborative partnership that seeks to enhance our understanding of the watershed so we can best manage our rivers, wetlands, and lakes. We began some of the early work towards heritage recognition for the North Saskatchewan River in the early 2000s, and so we are pleased to be supporting this Initiative being led by Smoky Lake County, which aims to amplify the stories and the culture of the North Saskatchewan River and its watershed.”*  
**Scott Millar, Executive Director, North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA)**

*“For thousands of years, the North Saskatchewan River has been an important place of gathering and community for Indigenous peoples. By ensuring its conservation, we can continue to protect the water and honour our collective relationship with nature. Edmontonians are deeply connected to the river and we are committed to making sure it stays clean and accessible for many generations to come.”*  
**The Honourable Amarjeet Sohi, Mayor of the City of Edmonton**

*“Since late 2019, the County has led a collaborative Initiative of municipalities, Indigenous communities, and other recreation and stewardship groups to advance the Canadian Heritage Rivers System designation for the North Saskatchewan River across Alberta. This designation will ensure greater awareness and collaboration among jurisdictions and river-users to foster sustainable tourism, business, and recreation opportunities through the recognition and celebration of the outstanding*

*cultural values of this iconic river.”*

**Lorne Halisky, Reeve & Division 4 Councillor, Smoky Lake County**

*“Even today I get goosebumps when I think about it... for me it is a symbol of my journey... emotionally and spiritually, it is lightyears away from where I grew up. And yet, there’s that same water flowing past every day. I film it. I take pictures of it. I go to it constantly for inspiration. It’s beautiful.”* (Interview with Paula Simons on Alberta Unbound podcast, 2022) Darrin Hagen, Drag Queen, Q Hall of Fame Canada, Playwright, actor, sound designer, composer, performer, director, and TV host, grew up in a trailer court in Rocky Mountain House during the 1970s, based in Edmonton Alberta since 1982.

*“More than two decades ago, the River Valley Alliance was born out of a collective dream to preserve, protect, enhance and connect the North Saskatchewan River Valley in the Edmonton Region by creating the longest river valley pedestrian trail through the largest river valley park system in North America. The name for this trail, Amisko Wacîw Mêskanaw, is in nêhiyawêwin (Cree language). This trail, and its reclaimed name, invites everyone to ‘sing the song’ of this beloved river valley and foster connections with the water, the land and the vast history within it, creating a lasting legacy for Canadians that future generations will be proud to share. It is well deserving of a Canadian Heritage River designation, and we are pleased to support the initiative being led by Smoky Lake County.*

**Kristine Archibald, Executive Director, River Valley Alliance (RVA)**

Current Grand Chief of Treaty 6 (Leonard Standingontheroad-as of January 2023)?

Current Métis Nation of Alberta President Audrey Poitras:

David Goldstein, Chief Executive Officer, Travel Alberta

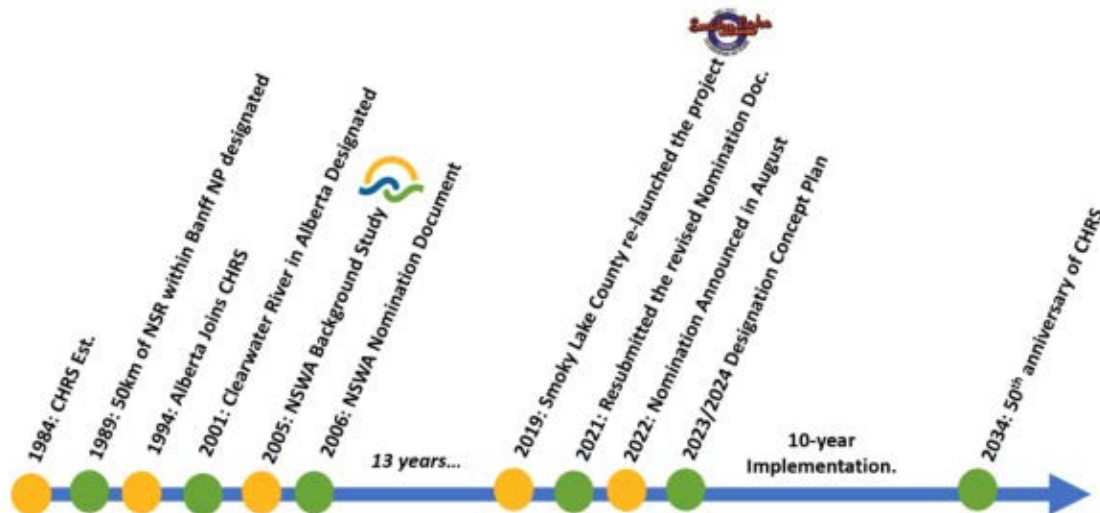
## 1.2 The Canadian Heritage Rivers System

The Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) was established in 1984 by the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, to celebrate the role and value of rivers to Canadians. This collaborative program delivered in conjunction with local communities and citizens provides significant Canadian rivers with special heritage status, to recognize and promote outstanding natural, cultural and recreational values. Today, over 10,000 km of Canadian Heritage Rivers have been designated, representing renowned national waterscapes, cultural treasures, and healthy waterways.

The CHRS has matured into a model for stewardship, cooperation and participation. It serves as a catalyst for engaging society in valuing the natural and cultural heritage of rivers and river communities. The CHRS continues to evolve into a comprehensive system, representing a full range of natural, cultural and recreational river values important to Canadians. Ultimately, it supports Canadian identity, health, economic prosperity, and quality of life. The Province of Alberta joined the CHRS under Premier Ralph Klein in 1994.

### What is Heritage?

“Heritage” describes tangible & intangible inheritances from the past, judged worthy of protecting and transmitting to future generations. Both a noun and adjective, “heritage” has in many contexts displaced the word “history”, including natural history, and the more familiar sense of human history (CHRB, 2000).



## 1.3 The Heritage River Nomination & Designation Process

To attain Canadian Heritage River status, a citizen-led group or government jurisdiction must propose a river to the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board, proving that it meets one or more of the natural or cultural selection and integrity guidelines defined by the CHRS. The nominated section must also be large enough to encompass these values, and provide users with an appreciation of the river’s resources and recreational experiences. Responsibility to collect and analyze information to determine heritage value and subsequently nominate the river rests with the jurisdiction within which the nominated river lies.

The nomination and designation process for new heritage rivers should have broad-based support, and aim to fill both thematic and geographic gaps in the national system. This requires consistent use of national



## 1.4 Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy's Role in the Canadian Heritage River System

The River's headwaters in Banff National Park was designated a federal heritage river in 1989, and includes a 49 km reach from the Columbia Icefields to Saskatchewan Crossing. The additional 718 km of downstream rivercourse within Alberta will provide an outstanding addition to the national system, filling key gaps and strengthening overall program implementation and awareness of this special river's heritage.

As a significant, mighty western prairie river, the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta connects the Rocky Mountains to the prairies, which fills a key geographic gap in the national heritage rivers system (**Figure 3**).



**Figure 3.** The North Saskatchewan River (Alberta) within Canada's Heritage Rivers System

The river also fills several strategic thematic gaps in the national system. It has shaped the identities of many Indigenous communities since time immemorial. It also played a pivotal role in the 19<sup>th</sup> century fur trade and settlement patterns that continue to shape Alberta. A deep sense of place for many Indigenous, Métis and settler communities has been associated with the River. Accordingly, cultural gaps in the national system representing both conflict *and* cooperation (e.g., trade) between Indigenous and European populations are extremely well represented.

**INSERT EMBLEMATIC CULTURAL HERITAGE IMAGE(S)-FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS**

The theme of Agricultural Extraction is also very well represented, as the North Saskatchewan River (Alberta) traverses and weaves across the breadbasket of

This river played a critical role in the history of both conflict *and* cooperation between various Indigenous and European populations through Canada's history.

Canada. A high density of river and land-based touring and recreation opportunities are also well represented by the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta.

INSERT A PHOTO OF AN AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE WITH NSR IN BACKGROUND

In terms of natural heritage, the river provides an outstanding example of a large river in the Boreal Plain terrestrial ecozone – which is currently underrepresented nationally in the heritage river system. Its drainage basin is nested within the Hudson Bay watershed, and uniquely links this Arctic Ocean receiving environment to the river’s headwaters in the Rocky Mountains. Nominated river sections also include eutrophic aquatic lakes/wetlands of the Interior Plains, also highlighted as a national gap. Several rare, endangered, or Of note, Endangered Lake Sturgeon make their home in the river, and have recovered substantially in numbers in recent years.

IMAGE – BOREAL PLAIN CHARACTER e.g., NEAR ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE?

## 1.5 Purpose of this Heritage River Designation Concept

The purpose of this report is twofold:

- (i) obtain national recognition of the North Saskatchewan River (Alberta) through formal designation as a Canadian Heritage River
- (ii) function as an implementation blueprint for long-term river heritage stewardship by multiple parties

Industry, governments, stakeholders, and other agencies should consider the information in this report to guide decision-making, activities, programs, and projects. Ultimately, the intention is for this document to improve heritage conservation, increase coordination among organizations along the river, strengthen the regional tourism sector, and support thriving communities with a deep sense of place.



## 1.6 Recognition and Respect for Existing Rights, Land Uses and Activities

Designation as a heritage river is purely a commemorative function. It provides a symbolic gesture of past, present, and future roles of the river in Alberta's and Canada's distinct and intertwined heritage. Designation has no legislative authority, and all jurisdictions and landowners retain any existing management authorities and responsibilities. No parties will lose control over their jurisdiction, autonomy, or control over land use and development decisions - either as a result of heritage river designation, or heritage river implementation activities and initiatives. **Alberta's participation in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System remains honorary and voluntary.**

A heritage river continues to recognize and respect all land and water-based rights, uses, activities, and interests of Indigenous peoples, communities, landowners and individuals. The Heritage River Designation Concept and any future implementation activities or programs that it stimulates shall not impact any existing rights, land uses, activities, or jurisdictional responsibilities of other entities. **In summary, obtaining designation status is a symbolic gesture that promotes river heritage awareness and stewardship.**

*This Heritage River Designation Concept is not prescriptive and does not bring about any additional legislation, policy, or development restrictions. Designation will not create 'red tape' or bureaucracy.*

## 1.7 Project Process & Context

A project bridging between the nomination and designation of the NSR has been underway since early 2022. The primary purpose and deliverable of the project was to compile this Heritage Designation Concept. Background research, engagement, mapping, writing, editing, communications and graphic design and document layout were the activities undertaken to generate content. **The ultimate goal of the project is to honour the heritage of the River, by articulating a clear, compelling narrative and path forwards that will achieve national heritage river designation. This report forms the basis for river heritage stewardship for multiple actors across public and private sectors, as well as civil society and Indigenous peoples, to steward this iconic river and its watershed.**



**Figure 4.** Project Timeline

Although spearheaded by Smoky Lake County, many partners have been involved and continue to support heritage river designation and stewardship. This includes but is not limited to the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance, Government of Alberta, municipalities, First Nations and Métis, as well as landowners and citizens who live, work, and play along the river and in the broader watershed. The project was led by Smoky Lake County, funded by a provincial grant, and supported by a consulting team including O2, pipikwan petakwan, Associated Environmental, Expedition Management Consulting, Kerr Wood Leidal, and Know History. **We are grateful to all who contributed input, stories, writing, review, or editing along this journey.**

### 1.7.1 Policy Context

The policy context related to heritage preservation, river management, and environmental stewardship for kisiskâciwani-sîpiy is influenced by many factors. This includes policies, legislation, regulations, plans, and approval processes under federal, provincial, and municipal domains. Provincial highlights include:

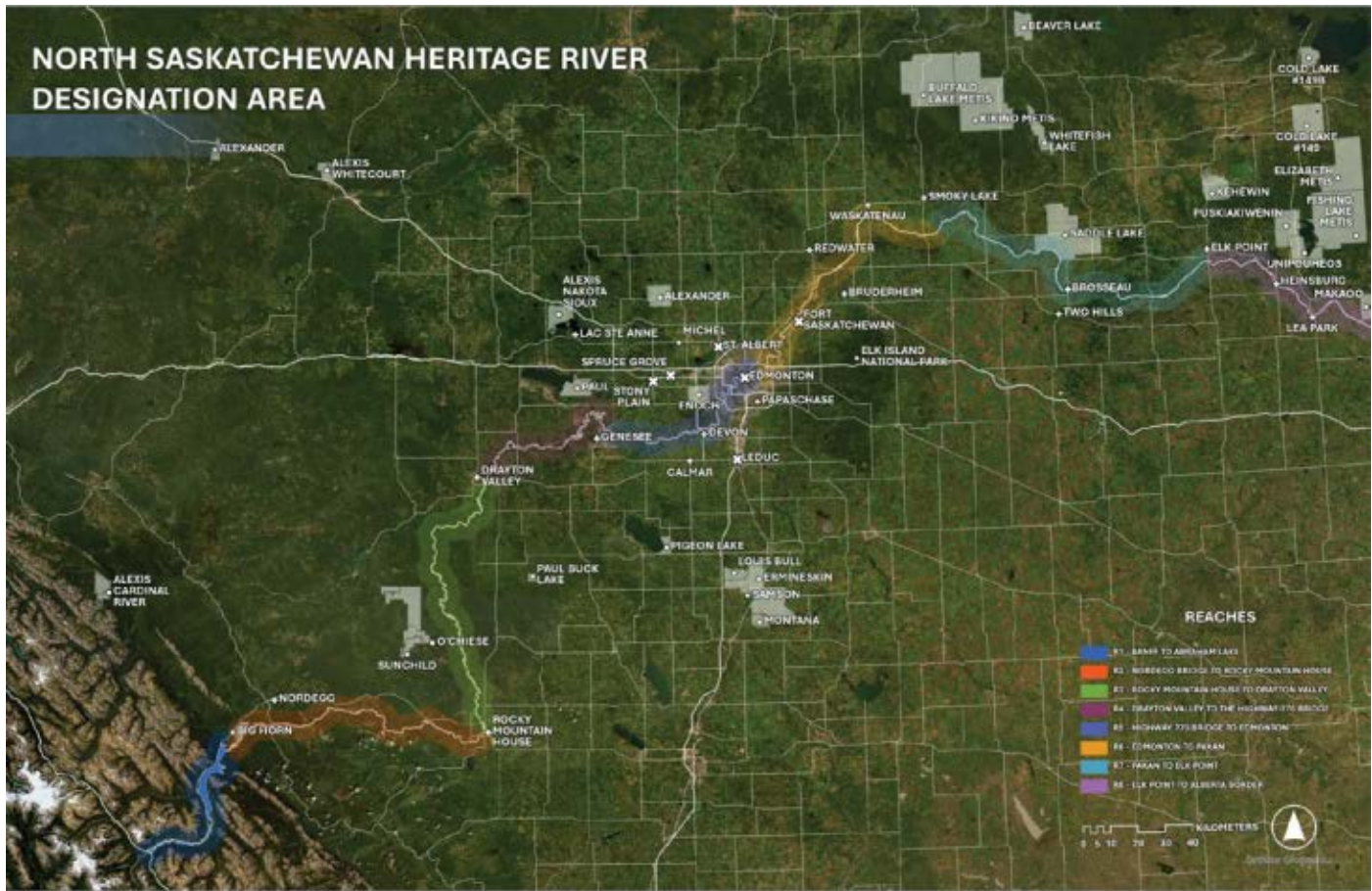
- The Government of Alberta's *Water for Life Strategy* aims to ensure sustainable, integrated, collaborative water and watershed management based on three goals: (i) Safe, secure drinking water; (ii) Healthy aquatic ecosystems, and (iii) Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy. The tasks, responsibilities, and actions under *Water for Life* flow across several provincial government departments, and include many policies, programs, and targets for site-specific water quality objectives.
- A key direction in *Water for Life* is the support for partnerships, including regional Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs). The relevant WPAC for this heritage concept is the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA), who have developed an [Integrated Watershed Management Plan](#) with four interrelated goals, as well as actions, strategies, roles and responsibilities, including both voluntary and statutory activities (NSWA, 2012).
- The *Water Act* provides a framework to allocate and protect water resources.
- The *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* regulates a wide range of activities with risks of environmental impacts, to promote the protection, enhancement, and wise use of the environment.
- The *Provincial Parks Act* governs the creation and management of provincial parks and protected areas, and helps support conservation, recreation, and tourism in these areas.
- The *Wildlife Act* protects and conserves wild animals in Alberta.
- The *Forestry Act* and the *Public Lands Act* provide additional relevant land management legislation.
- The *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* provides an integrated land use framework and legislated regional planning processes, based on a comprehensive approach to land, water, and natural resources.
- The *Municipal Government Act* delegates powers related to municipal services, planning and development decision-making.
- The *Historical Resources Act* establishes a framework to identify, protect, and conserve historic resources, including archaeological sites, buildings, and cultural landscapes.
- Alberta's Heritage Preservation Partnership Program provides grants and other supports to individuals, organizations, and municipalities involved in heritage preservation activities.

Federal legislation with a direct bearing on the management of Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy include the *Fisheries Act* and *Wastewater Systems Effluent Regulations*, *Canadian Navigable Waters Act*, *Species at Risk Act*, and *Migratory Birds Convention Act (1994)*. In addition, Indigenous rights, self-determination, land and water resources and heritage is also supported by the *Constitution Act (1867)*, signed Treaties, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (2021)*, and many Indigenous-led initiatives.

Municipal policies are far too numerous to list here. However, many City of Edmonton policies are directly related to watershed, environmental, and river valley protection, including the *Natural Area Systems Policy*, *Environmental Policy*, *Open Space Policy*, *Top of Bank Policy*, the *EPCOR Water Services and Wastewater Treatment Bylaw*, and *EPCOR Drainage Services Bylaw*.

## 1.8 Heritage River Concept Area & Reaches

This section clarifies and depicts the location of the Heritage River Concept Area, including eight segmented river reaches. **Appendix X** includes a map package and additional descriptions for each reach.



**Figure 5.** Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy Heritage River Designation Area

Flowing 1287 km from the Columbia Icefields to the ‘Forks’ in Saskatchewan, kisiskâciwani-sîpiy is Canada’s 12<sup>th</sup> longest river, and part of Canada’s second longest river system: the Nelson-Saskatchewan. **The North Saskatchewan River (Alberta) Heritage Concept Area represents over 55% of the river’s total length, from Banff National Park to the provincial border with Saskatchewan.** The Heritage Concept Area includes a corridor along the length of this river (**Figure 5**). However, many stewardship activities affecting the conditions of the river will also occur in other parts of the broader North Saskatchewan watershed.

### Banff National Park’s Designated Section

Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy originates at Saskatchewan Glacier on the Columbia Icefields, Banff National Park. After tumbling through a steep-walled gorge between Mount Athabasca & Mount Saskatchewan, it is joined by waters from Nigel Creek, and the Alexandra, Howse, and Mistaya Rivers near Saskatchewan Crossing. This section of the river was already previously recognized with designation in 1989, due to outstanding heritage values.

## 1.9 Summary of Engagements

Engagement with stakeholders, Indigenous peoples, elected officials, and local communities was carried out during the process of preparing this designation document. The scope and form of these engagements met or exceeded all of the requirements in both CHRS (2023), and the nominating jurisdiction of Alberta.

Engagement processes, tools, and key outcomes/ learnings from the feedback received are summarized below, including Indigenous, Public, and Tourism Sector engagement.

It is clear from the responses received that the North Saskatchewan River matters to Indigenous peoples, Albertans, and Canadians. The river is a symbol and icon for the identity of many Indigenous communities as well as of Western Canada. ***What we heard has been weaved through the narrative in this report, and clearly demonstrates that this River should be designated as a national heritage river.***

### 1.9.1 Indigenous Engagements

An important component of the process was engaging with Indigenous communities who have relationships with the North Saskatchewan River. Using visiting as an approach for relationship building, activities were grounded in co-leading the dialogue, and prioritizing community protocol when speaking about the River. This work gathered stories, narratives, and teachings on connections with the River (past, present and future) and Indigenous perspectives on river governance and co-governance. A circle of Indigenous Elders and knowledge keepers opened the dialogue in a ceremony in amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton), on November 17, 2022. The project received a blessing, and First Nations and Métis Settlements were then invited to virtual or in person visits between November 2022 to March 2023. A total of 68 community members from over 10 Indigenous communities shared stories and dialogue through this process, sharing stories of the river, connections with the river, as well as river governance and the future.

Throughout the background research for this project, visiting was used to build and rebuild relationships first, prior to moving on to priorities and governance. Participants were also asked to think about the river through all seasons, as certain stories are shared in specific seasons to give a fuller and more holistic perspective.

The results have been carefully interpreted to inform and shape this Designation Concept. Efforts have been made to reflect the importance of storytelling in traditional knowledge, the role of Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy / Omaka-ty in creation stories and spirituality, ceremony, trade, as a source of medicine and food, as a connection to the past, and as a beacon of hope for the future. A strong interest in the river, and a desire for greater roles and involvement of Indigenous peoples in river stewardship, conservation, restoration, and governance was also heard clearly. The importance of protocol and starting with ceremony and providing real weight to Indigenous voices for effective river co-governance and decision-making was also heard. **The importance of language and returning original place names was also heard clearly, as a way to reflect decolonization, and to breathe a spirit into the work that cannot be done in English alone. This has been incorporated throughout this document in response, including rebranding the main title in Cree.**

Many Indigenous participants also viewed this as only the start of a much longer process. They communicated that the act of heritage designation itself is largely irrelevant *unless* it is a stepping stone leading to more meaningful improvements to the health of the river and our relationships with it. One participant also referenced the example of the Magpie River in Quebec - which has been given specific legal rights - as something to strive towards in the future.

All Indigenous participants are viewed as co-researchers in this work. The intention and hope is that they will see their voices reflected clearly and feel some ownership over the contents of this Designation Concept. Outputs of the Indigenous engagements, the ways they have been summarized and interpreted, and the contents of this Designation Concept should also be viewed as a living, breathing spirit, that can grow and change with time, just like the River.

### 1.9.2 Public & Stakeholder Engagements

Engagement on the Heritage Designation Concept occurred from **October 2022 to February 2023**. To reach a wide range of river stakeholders, several engagement methods and tools were used, ensuring multiple avenues for participants to choose from, as summarized below.

RESOURCES	DESCRIPTION	STATS	AUDIENCE	FORMAT
<b>Inform</b>				
 <b>Project Webpage</b>	The online hub for all project information, <a href="https://smokylokecounty.ab.ca/m/nsr-heritage-river-chrs">smokylokecounty.ab.ca/m/nsr-heritage-river-chrs</a>		Public	Online
 <b>Direct Emails</b>	Direct emails to 236 stakeholder organizations representing diverse communities and interests.		Stakeholder Groups	Online
<b>Engage</b>				
 <b>Online Story Collector Survey</b>	The online story collector provided participants with the opportunity to share their unique stories, perspectives, and experiences.	28 survey respondents	Stakeholder Groups	Online/Print
 <b>Interactive Portal &amp; Online Map</b>	This website included detailed information about the project as well as an interactive map to collect feedback on the specific reaches.	235 map pins	Stakeholder Groups	Online
 <b>Public &amp; Stakeholder Workshops</b>	2 virtual workshop sessions were held with facilitated small-group discussions. Open to interested groups to register.	14 workshop attendees 11 organizations	Stakeholder Groups	Online/Discussion
 <b>Stakeholder Discussion Guide</b>	PDF booklet with key project material and interactive form fields to provide feedback as an organization.	3 guides collected	Stakeholder Groups	Online/Print
 <b>Stakeholder Meetings</b>	Meetings with stakeholder groups held upon request.	6 meetings	Stakeholders	Online/Discussion

Common themes that emerged from the engagements included:

- ALIGNING RECREATION AND PRESERVATION to balance recreation with a natural river environment.
- ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY in the river valley and connected ravines and creeks is important to facilitate wildlife movement and watershed health.
- IMPROVING RIVER ACCESS was seen by many as critical along much of the river, including safe hand launches and bail-out points, emergency access and supporting facilities.
- RIVERSIDE CAMPING opportunities have the potential to offer serene, wilderness experiences.
- THE NEED TO MAINTAIN WATER QUALITY for drinking water, fishing, recreation, and other uses.
- A STRONG DESIRE FOR STEWARDSHIP, including river clean-up events and citizen science.
- RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS VALUE, sacred sites and traditional knowledge, and a desire to learn more.
- GRASSROOTS SOLUTIONS are needed, as some expressed trepidation that federal heritage designation might impact their way of life, ability to maintain autonomy, or self-govern their community affairs.

Reach-specific spatially georeferenced comments under various themes were also collected (Appendix X). The feedback received and themes heard have guided the focus and framing of this Designation Concept.

In addition to the public engagement, an additional engagement process specific to the tourism industry was also undertaken, to gather information regarding tourism assets, visitor market opportunities, tourism development readiness, and potential growth areas for tourism along the river. The process was undertaken from February to March, 2023. Overall, 256 Stakeholders from across all eight river reaches were invited to participate. Engagement activities included the following:

- Online survey (22 responses)
- 3 Digital input workshops (9 participants)
- One-on-one interviews (11 participants)

Across the entire study area there are many interrelated strengths for supporting high quality recreation and tourism. These include outdoor adventure and recreation assets, cultural attractions and historic sites, paddling experiences, natural attractions, as well as gateway and hub communities. Gaps overall include winter and shoulder season experiences, accommodations, riverside support amenities, festivals and events, culinary attractions and offerings, and visitor information. Northern lights viewing was also highlighted as a specific experience growing in importance, particularly among international tourists. There are opportunities to further grow water-based tourism, outdoor adventure tourism, nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, and Indigenous tourism experiences. Combinations of these experiences and assets have high potential to provide authentic, unforgettable experiences to visitors.

Overall, Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers are the two recommended visitor profiles that were identified as most likely to visit and benefit from experiences associated with the river. Both of these target tourism markets are interested in being immersed in local culture and history and tend to seek out deeper engagement with the destinations they visit. These visitor types are likely compatible and complementary to maintaining the cultural and natural heritage integrity of the river in a sustainable fashion over time.

Among both public and tourism sector engagement processes, improving river access and associated facilities was identified as a critical need along several parts of the river system. Old ferry crossings, bridges, and some private lands (with landowner permissions) were flagged as important potential areas for new and improved river access. Safe hand-launches and bail-out points were raised as an important consideration in enabling increased recreational use of the river. Balancing motorized access with the need to keep the feeling of wilderness while on the river was also highlighted. The need for emergency vehicle access was also raised. In the surrounding lands, there is a need for improved staging areas for recreational use of all types, to ensure that viewpoints, parking, and camping can be done safely and with the comfort of visitors in mind.

*"I first paddled this reach (Nordegg to Rocky Mountain House) 50 years ago, and it is the premier 3-5 day canoe trip in Alberta. The water is challenging in places, the scenery spectacular, the on-stream camping is very good, and it is accessible.*

*-Public / Stakeholder Engagement participant"*

---

## 2 The Heritage Values of Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy

Coursing through diverse landscapes and cultural identities, the North Saskatchewan River has always been important to Indigenous and Canadian history. The heritage significance of the river continues to increase, as population growth in Alberta remains strong, while the river's environment and water quality has shown promising signs of recovery in recent decades.

This section synthesizes and summarizes the history and resources of the nominated river, focusing on nationally significant highlights<sup>1</sup>. Included are subsections on Indigenous heritage and values, followed by sections on cultural, recreational, and natural heritage. The heritage integrity of the river - based on recently updated national guidelines - is also summarized.

### 2.1 Indigenous Heritage & Values

Since time immemorial, Indigenous history has been intertwined with this river. The heritage of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy), nêhiyaw (Cree), Ktunaxa (Kootenay), Stoney Nakoda, Nakota Isga, Dene and Tsuut'ina, as well as the Métis peoples can all be linked to these waters.

The North Saskatchewan River is also known as:

- *kisiskâciwani-sîpiy*  
("swift-flowing river") (Cree)
- *omaka-ty*  
("the big river") (Blackfoot)



**Figure 6.** Cree camp, 1871, near present Town of Vermilion  
(Source: Library and Archives Canada C-00518, Charles Horetzky, as shown in (Milholland, 2015))

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<sup>1</sup> This section focuses on a river-wide synthesis and summary. This is further supplemented by more reach-specific information, as well as more action-oriented implementation details found in Section 3 – Heritage Strategy.

Indigenous oral histories stress the importance of the river in many ways: spiritually, as a connector and travel route, a gathering place, and as a source of life. This “swift-flowing”, “big” river has also supported many wildlife and fish species, plants and medicines, and traditional Indigenous harvesting practices. Those who signed the Treaties were also promised the right to pursue hunting, trapping, and fishing, ‘so long as the river flows’. The river played a key part in the signing, oral history, and shared understanding of Treaty No.6, both at Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt in 1876, and the Adhesion at Fort Edmonton in 1877. The river has and evidently continues to play a vital role in the social, economic, and cultural well-being of Indigenous peoples.

For many, physical and spiritual signs and signals that the land and river is healthy are very important to their own individual and community feelings of health and wellbeing. It is also clear that a deep pride, sense of place, and feelings of responsibility and hope for this river continues today in multiple Indigenous communities, within and beyond the Treaty 6 and Treaty 7 territories.



Past stories, current cultural connections, and future governance of river heritage and associated values were core themes heard during Indigenous engagements. There are many ways Indigenous people connect to water and with kisiskâciwan-sîpî specifically. A summary of core themes shared is provided below under several categories. Respecting oral history, some details are reserved for those present at visits to communities. Sacred teachings are mentioned, but details remain with knowledge holders, to be shared with those who build the relationship and request that knowledge in ethical ways.

## Creation

Water is sacred. Water has spirit. Water is life, and water has a very profound place in the nehiyawak (Cree) Creation story. During the Circle of Elders opening dialogue, many shared how Cree people are connected to all water through the creation of mother earth. The creation story is shared by those who carry that traditional knowledge. There are shorter and longer versions of this story, but each shares an important lesson, water was here first and is the source of life for humans. The Elders in this Circle shared about their spiritual connections to kisiskâciwansîpî and their interactions with the River in and around amiskwaciwâskahikan. It was clear from the opening that there is a profound sense of hope in Indigenous peoples - specifically the Elders - for repairing the health of the River in the way Creator intended it. By understanding original teachings, like the creation story, we can no longer play ignorant of our kinship responsibilities to kisiskâciwan-sîpî.





**Trade**

The River was a gathering place for many reasons, but was also used for trade between Indigenous nations long before European settlers entered the picture. If we speak about kisiskâciwan-sîpî and trade, we cannot remove Indigenous history before the arrival of the Hudson’s Bay Company. Many nations have historic economic relationships with the River from well before this time – such as the Iron Confederacy (*Nehiyaw-Pwat*) alliance. Archaeological dig sites confirm that many First Nations from the north and south converged around the River to engage in trade with one another dating back thousands of years. Indigenous People honour the water as a common connector that enables trade, not simply as a resource for economic gain.

**INSERT IMAGE AND/OR QUOTES**

**Ceremony**

Indigenous communities throughout the region shared many stories of ceremonies held near the River. Water is at the heart of many ceremonies. It can symbolize purity and life. Without access to clean, healthy water, some essential ceremonies are at risk of being lost. Indigenous people now have to pray for kisiskâciwan-sîpî, instead of through and alongside the river, as in some cases, sacred ceremonial sites (i.e. Sun Dance), have been moved to different locations as a consequence of past harm to



In 1871, Cree and Dog Flathead the North of square miles. awarded he addressed he was SA  
 the River. The water has become sick, and this is the time to bring healing to the River. In return, the River will help bring healing to the rest of the world.

**Water Ceremony: tu xa yati (Dëne Sųłnë), ᓄᓐᓐ ᓄᓐᓐᓐᓐᓐᓐ (Plains Cree)**

*“We had ceremonies before crossing rivers. Now we do a miniaturized version because we’re traveling in cars, but we still do it. ...That water is our mother’s milk.”*

- Jerry Saddleback, Samson, Cree (Source: Fort Edmonton)

*“What is ceremony? Ceremony keeps us in line with our environment, with the spirit world, with our relationships with all living things, including each other. ...Because we, as human beings, have a tendency to become destructive, to take too much, and to walk out of balance from Mother Earth’s embrace.*

*Ceremonies re-teach us how everything moves in cycles, so we can internalize this balance. ...Ceremonies become a fundamental way of doing things. We’re not talking about religion – it’s a relationship, harmony, and balance. ...And Ceremony is the renewal.”*

- Lewis Cardinal, Sucker Creek, Cree (Source: Fort Edmonton)

*“There are some ceremonies where you acknowledge all forms of water. Water that comes in the form of rain, snow, water that comes off the glaciers, water that comes out of the ground.*

*We always pray that we’ll keep the water safe for our grandchildren.”*

- Wilton Goodstriker, Kainai, Blackfoot (Source: Fort Edmonton)

As our hearts beat over and over,  
*ê-pâh-pahkahokoyahk kâh-kihtwâm.*  
 As we take in the clean air of life,  
*ê-yâ-yêhyêyahk kâh-kihtwâm.*  
 The way water washes thirst from our lips,

*ê-mâ-mimihkwêyahk nipiy kâh-kihtwâm.*  
 Just as the North Saskatchewan River courses continually through the carotid of the prairies,  
*ê-pâ-pimicthwahk kisiskâciwani-sîpiy kâkikê.*

- McIlwraith, Naomi L. *Kiyâm: Poems.* AU Press, 2012.

## The Role of Women

Grandmother Moon controls the tides in both women and the waters. With such a powerful connection, women are given the responsibility to be protectors of the water. This means that women are protectors for kisiskâciwan-sîpî, and in return, kisiskâciwan-sîpî supports the swimmers, the crawlers, the legged ones, the winged ones, and the plants. It is more than a spiritual relationship between women and the River, this is an all-encompassing relationship; it is an ethical one, an ontological one, a kinship one, a reciprocal one, and a holistic one, that goes well beyond the defined parameters of the English language. For example, in Cree there are unique words to describe water *around* a Beaver dam. Indigenous peoples - and women in particular - need to be involved with this Heritage River, as Western worldviews, language, and connections are too limited.



*Bull boats, made from hide wrapped branch frames, were used primarily by women to cross rivers in Blackfoot territory. Source: Fort Edmonton.*

## Plants and Medicines

Many traditional medicines can be found along the banks and land of kisiskâciwan-sîpî. In some cases, these medicines are needed for sacred bundles, such as the Beaver Bundle of the Blackfoot. Indigenous people across Alberta shared stories about medicines that were found near the River before, but have been lost over time. Rat root, a healing medicine, was once easily found near parts of kisiskâciwan-sîpî closest to the O'Chiese First Nation, but today, this community has to travel a long distance to find this medicine. Communities often expressed that despite the legal duty of developers to consult about the land and medicines, land restoration plans are often inadequate. kisiskâciwan-sîpî has given life to many medicines, and has moved them further away to protect them. However, in doing so, Indigenous communities have lost proximity and access to traditional medicines. Berries were also harvested in great abundance along the river, in particular Saskatoon berries that were used for making prized dried Pemmican.

## INSERT IMAGE

## Hunting & Fishing

Just as the medicines have left, so have the animals. Lands that were once plenty with moose, elk, and deer are now sparse. The animal world speaks to other societies in a language that humans don't understand. Animals learn from kisiskâciwan-sîpî and have retreated to water further away from settlements. The impact has been harmful to Indigenous communities who depend on hunting. Parts of the moose are also sacred and needed for specific ceremonies. Without the ability to hunt, Indigenous people will go more than hungry, their spirits will starve. The River brings the animal world closer to the human world. Without a healthy river, we also lose this healthy kinship. Fishing has also been impacted by the River, with parts of kisiskâciwan-sîpî once providing a major source of food for communities. Now, many communities shared that they wouldn't even think of eating the fish from these waters. Other animals harvested for centuries from along the river's shoreline can no longer be found, including bison, pronghorn, and Trumpeter Swan.

## Indigenous Archaeological Sites & Artefacts

Archaeological surveys have revealed evidence of human activity along the river for about 13,000 years. Numerous important Indigenous cultural and archaeological sites are found along the river. These include ancient campsites, sweat lodges represented by broken rock piles, fire pits, and stone cairns, and sundance lodges. Found artifacts at sites have included paleo materials including evidence of harvesting megafauna, cracked bison bones, spear and arrow points, pottery, and possibly an effigy. Some coulees and steep areas associated with the river valley and tributaries near the easternmost reaches of the River are good candidates for possible historic buffalo pounds and jumps. Many sites are relatively dense with found artifacts, including but not limited to the Kootenay Plains / Lake Abraham areas, and several of the Whitemud, Blackmud, and Rundle Park sites in the City of Edmonton. Ancient burial sites have also been located along and near the river. Together, the range of sites provide exceptional representations of many cultures and Indigenous histories over time, including but not limited to the nêhiyaw (Cree), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Ktunaxa (Kootenay), Stoney, and Métis.



## Post Contact

The advent of the fur trade, followed by colonial settlement brought about dramatic changes in the traditional lifestyles of First Nations, including their seasonal migrations and economic activities. Indigenous peoples transformed from traditional subsistence hunting, to hunting furs for trade. Cree and Assiniboine peoples in the lower parts of the watershed often acted as a bridge or intermediaries between European and Blackfoot peoples in the upper North Saskatchewan. European explorers and settlers also brought disease, which devastated First Nations communities, including outbreaks of smallpox in 1780, 1838, 1856 and 1869. These outbreaks killed a significant percentage of First Nations people, with lasting impacts on social and economic well-being.

Many riverside locations were also sites for traditional sundances, while a multitude of oral stories, narratives, and legends directly or indirectly refer to the river. Several stories shared during the recent Indigenous engagements are included below to reflect this cultural heritage. Interestingly, these stories also defy categorization under the CHRS themes, as they span and integrate across the heritage themes of culture, nature, recreation, and spirituality. These stories also weave together deep moral teachings on the connections between water, land, animals, people, spirituality, history, sustainability, and stewardship that we can all learn from if we take the time to slow down and listen deeply.

### *The Jackfish's Catch*

Jackfish was hanging out in the cold, rocky water, thinking about what she could get up to today. She was surrounded by other Jack and never really spent a day alone. She dreamed of what it might look like to be alone for a while. Not competing for food. Not defending herself against other Jack who tries to take her napping space. Most importantly, not worrying about her eggs.



Jackfish was getting hungry though and decided that it might be time to get a snack. She heard rumblings about a great spot that was filled with smaller fish that day. She headed over and scoped out a good place to wait. She was very fast, but she knew that in order to get the burst of energy needed to catch the fish, she would have to be patient.

There were other Jackfish everywhere! She saw others get fish after fish, but there were too many of them, and not enough to eat. She groaned to herself again and thought how great it would be to be alone. All of a sudden a fish landed quite close to her! Jackfish locked her focus, and without thinking twice she launched herself at her lunch. She took a hard bite and felt a little pinch. Ouch!

All of a sudden Jackfish was being dragged by her mouth to the surface of the water. She pulled and pulled, trying to get away. Her heart was racing and her mouth was being torn. She knew that she had no chance, but her mind started thinking about her children. She thought about all her friends and family.

She wasn't going to give up that fast! Jackfish broke the surface but she kept fighting. She zoomed left, she zagged right! She pulled herself downward, even though it was hurting her mouth. No matter how hard she worked, Jackfish kept getting dragged up to the surface. Eventually, she looked around. There was a young man, he wasn't quite a child, but he wasn't an adult either. She didn't know much about humans, but she heard that sometimes they pull you out of the River. Sometimes you come back, sometimes you don't. The young man was double her size but she decided to keep fighting. As soon as she got close to him, she tried again. Zoom left, zag right. she told herself.

She caught him off guard and pulled so hard he almost fell in. He brought her up to him and she froze. He hooked his hand in her mouth and pulled out the pinching object. The pain was still there, but she felt relieved. He put his fingers under her gills and held her on his side. She was at eye level with his chest.

She wondered if she would be one of the Jackfish to go back home or not. And if not, where was she going? At this point, she was struggling to breathe. The young boy had her out of the water for a while and she was starting to think it was the end. He laid her on the ground, and she wondered if she could jump all the way back into the River. Before she could act, everything went black.

Jackfish gave her life to feed the young man. In the beginning, she struggled with the idea, but after a while, she softened. She knew Creator asked her to help the humans by giving her body for food. She was happy to live her responsibility and her spirit stayed watching over her home, the River.

It was about 30 years later, and Jackfish visited the River. She looked around, but she did not see any other Jackfish. The water was lower, and there wasn't much room left. Either way, 'Where did all the fish go?', she thought. Jackfish thought back to her wish. She wished to be alone, she wished for the water to be quiet. She felt guilty. What if this was her fault? What if her wish made all the fish disappear and the water shrink?

Jackfish asked the water, "Water, what can I do to heal you? You need the fish back. The young boy and his family will be hungry". Water said to her, "Pray for me. Things are not okay. But they can be, as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and I flow".

## The Snake's Vibrations

Rattlesnake had just finished finally shedding his skin. Three days before, he had slithered over to the bank of the river and rubbed his head on a large bolder. He knew he needed the rock's help to renew and start regenerating himself again.

As he moved around his prairie landscape, trying to let go of his old skin, he made a few stops to visit friends. His first visit was to Caribou. Rattlesnake and Caribou were sharing stories and laughing. They had a very playful relationship. All of a sudden, Caribou looks down at Rattlesnake and jokes, "Rattlesnake, you are always walking on the ground, I can never see all of you. Do you have tiny legs down there?". Rattlesnake playfully hissed his tongue at Caribou. He then smiles softly and explains, "There are two sides to me. One always touches the land, and one always faces the sky". He then laughs at Caribou and says "Unlike you, your belly floats somewhere in the middle". The two finished their laughs and Rattlesnake continued on his journey.

On his next visit, Rattlesnake decided to visit his friend Eagle. The two had a different relationship than Rattlesnake and Caribou. Eagle was more wise, and Rattlesnake enjoyed talking about deep, meaningful things in his life. Rattlesnake began sharing with Eagle that sometimes he felt alone. He wished that he could shout, like their friend Wolf. Anytime Wolf feels alone, he can howl and his friends come find him. Eagle took Rattlesnake under his wing and told him, "Rattlesnake, you have a tail that makes beautiful music". Rattlesnake sighed. He knew he had a tail, but it always scared others away, it didn't bring them closer. Eagle whispered sweetly, "It doesn't scare me". Rattlesnake smiled and gave his tail a little wiggle. Eagle told him, "If you ever feel alone, you just have to rattle your tail. Remember, I can see a lot from up here, and you are not alone". Rattlesnake was warmed inside. He began making his way, but he knew that he could always hear his friend through his vibrations if he just rattled his tail.

Rattlesnake had time to visit one more friend. He made his way to Muskrat's place. Muskrat was pretty tired, but he welcomed Rattlesnake in. Muskrat explained that he hadn't done much visiting all winter. He told Rattlesnake he was getting excited for the spring! The ice was shifting and melting, the water would start flowing, and that would make it easier for him to find food. Rattlesnake was excited for his friend and asked him what he likes the most about spring. Muskrat thought for a moment, trying to remember last spring. It felt so far away, but he could imagine it because it was right around the corner. Muskrat said, "I like seeing the land wake up. It's beautiful to take something old and make something new".

Rattlesnake, almost finished shedding his skin thought about his experience. He said to Muskrat, "Muskrat, I think I am like the spring. I shed my skin and I start new. My tail comes off and grows bigger". Muskrat was curious about Rattlesnake. He never hung out with other animals who shed their skin like this. He said, "Rattlesnake, can I ask you a question about your skin?". Rattlesnake loved questions! It gave him a chance to think about his journey. He nodded at Muskrat and allowed him to ask his question. Muskrat tilted his head and asked, "What happens to your skin when you leave it?". Rattlesnake never thought about that before. Usually, he just slithered away and never really saw it again. Thinking deeply, he answered, "I think when I shed my skin it just stays where I left it. It becomes a part of my history. Sometimes it's not straight, or clean, but it stays there, the trace of my connection between the land and the sky; my lifeline on the path to starting new.". Muskrat nodded to show his understanding. He said to Rattlesnake, "My friend, I think you are just like the spring".



**Ultimately, this river reflects multiple, rich Indigenous histories and cultural values. For these reasons alone, it represents an outstanding addition to Canada's heritage river system.**

## 2.2 Cultural Heritage

In addition to Indigenous cultural heritage, the modern development of Western Canada is also written into the history of this River. There are a multitude of outstanding cultural heritage values, represented by a considerable concentration of nationally and provincially significant heritage sites.

This river played critical roles in the fur trade and history of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), as well as early scientific expeditions, and strongly shaped human settlement patterns. It is also associated with the establishment of Edmonton as Alberta's provincial capital, and considerable agricultural and industrial heritage. The River also continues to be a source of inspiration for art, music, literature and stories.

**“The Story of this River  
is the Story of the West”**

**-James Gordon, 'Roll on North  
Saskatchewan' chorus**

**Intend to develop a graphic timeline of key early historical events associated with the River (potentially engage Billie Milholland to confirm/ decide what is actually 'key?')**

**Pre-Contact:** Iron Confederacy between Indigenous Nations

**1730s:** Métis Joseph La France traverses the river

**1778:** One of the first *Fort-des-Prairies* is established in the Greater Edmonton Area by the French

**1787:** Explorer and fur trader David Thompson (Koo Koo Sint - 'one who looks at stars') winters with the Blackfoot along the North Saskatchewan River

**1792:** Fort George and Buckingham House built near present-day Elk Point

**1795:** Fort Augustus and Edmonton House first established

**1796:** Peter Fidler has the first York Boat built at Buckingham House

**1800:** Fur trader Duncan McGillivray explores west of Rocky Mountain House to the headwaters, and David Thompson arrives at Rocky Mountain House.

**1801:** Fort Augustus and Edmonton House are relocated to the present-day City of Edmonton site

**1806:** Jaco Finlay builds a supply post on the river in the mountains above Kootenai Plains

**1807:** David Thompson, guided by the Kutenais and accompanied by seven French Canadians, his wife, and children, follows the North Saskatchewan River valley to Kootenay Plains. Thompson later reached what he would name Howse Pass on June 25<sup>th</sup> (Andra-Warner, 2010).

**1812:** HBC establishes Fort Edmonton as a permanent location, in part because it was the furthest point west of Hudson Bay a canoe brigade could reach before freeze-up.

**1858:** James Hector, geologist from the Palliser Expedition, reaches the Saskatchewan River Crossing area

**1874:** The Northwest Mounted Police make their long march from Eastern Canada to Fort Edmonton

**1885:** The Northwest Resistance and Frog Lake Massacre event

In the spring of 1795, Angus Shaw of the North West Company built Fort Augustus near the confluence of the Sturgeon and Saskatchewan Rivers. William Tomlison of the HBC builds rival Edmonton House in the fall “within a musket shot of the Nor’Westers” (Milholland, 2015)

## The Fur Trade

The fur trade along this River was a critical part of early contact history between Indigenous and European populations. Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy was a key location for many early contacts, reflecting the start of a period of trade and mutual cooperation with numerous tribes across a vast inland trading network. The first European traders plying the river with canoes were French Canadian *coureurs de bois* based out of Montreal, followed by English fur traders several decades later (Milholland, 2015).

For centuries afterwards, the River's core role as part of a vast transportation network facilitating the international fur trade cannot be understated. It linked rich, wildlife-bearing Boreal Forest, Plains, and Rocky Mountain landscapes to trading posts as far as York Factory on Hudson's Bay. The most luxurious pelts highly fashionable in Europe tended to be found in colder, northerly regions of Canada, and for a long period, Fort Edmonton was the collection and logistics depot for prime furs transported out of the Peace/Athabasca delta, prior to shipment east (Milholland, 2015). York boats - first built at Buckingham House in 1796 – were the primary means of transportation and trade along the river, until they started to be replaced by steamships in 1875.

The fur trade period also included intense rivalry and competition between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Montreal-based Northwest Trading Company. Rival fur trading networks between various Indigenous and European traders played a large role in establishing trading posts and settlements further and further west, following the course of the river upstream (Andra-Warner, 2010).



York boat  
photo Mike Milholland

## Early Expeditions

Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy figured prominently in shaping and facilitating travel for the expeditions of many early explorers, including those of David Thompson - the famous explorer and fur trader. His explorations were funded by both the Hudson Bay Company and the Northwest Trading Company, as he left the former for the latter partway through his career (Andra-Warner, 2010). Thompson's impressive explorations of the North Saskatchewan River between 1787-1807 also relied on Indigenous guides who knew the land, including Peigan guide Old Bear, a Cree named He Dog, and various Kutenai guides (Andra-Warner, 2010).

Thompson is considered one of the world's greatest geographers. He accurately mapped the main travel routes through over 4.3 million square kilometres of Canadian and American West, in the process journeying some 80,000 kilometres by canoe, horse, and foot. The story of Thompson would not be complete without acknowledging his remarkable Métis wife, Charlotte. It is likely that she also travelled over 42,000 km by canoe, foot, and horseback (Andra-Warner, 2010).



Later, the Palliser expedition (1857-1860) explored and mapped areas south of the North Saskatchewan River to the unsurveyed American boundary, and west to the Rockies. They collected detailed notes on flora and fauna and meteorological, geological, and astronomical observations, as well as transportation and settlement potential. Notably, a ‘fertile belt’ in the vicinity of the North Saskatchewan River was identified as well suited for agriculture, in contrast to the more arid lands southeast in the ‘Palliser Triangle’ (Spry, 1963).

*“The country bordering the river in this part of its course is very beautiful, as the high banks of the river retire and form by combining with a still higher table land, undulating hills that rise to a height of 300 to 400 feet. On the north side are thus formed the Snake Hills which are free of wood except in ravines.”*

- Dr. James Hector, Palliser Expedition, 1858, describing the North Saskatchewan River 8 km upstream of Saddle Lake Creek (Milholland, 2015)

### Settlement Patterns

The River provided a natural, geographically convenient corridor for generations of explorers and settlers accessing western Canada, right up until the bridge-building boom after the second World War. Many settlement patterns including the siting of dwellings, lot arrangements and design, spacing and arrangements were a direct result of the influence of the river on economic and social activities. Often built near existing Indigenous settlements or trading routes, a chain of fur trading posts and associated settlements were built directly along the North Saskatchewan River, beginning in the late 1700s. Many of these have since evolved into the modern urban areas known today as the City of Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, and Rocky Mountain House.

At many locations, irregular shaped lots and transportation networks followed the riverbanks. For example, in several places, the River determined how agricultural land was divided through land surveys. The River Lot method of surveying was adopted for the early communities of Victoria Settlement, Fort Saskatchewan, and Fort Edmonton. Long, narrow river lots are particularly evident along a 12 km length of the river at Victoria District – now a National Historic Site. River lot patterns are also evident at Lobstick Settlement – an early Métis settlement of 18 river lots. The river’s path is also strongly reflected in streetscapes and lot patterns within several of Edmonton’s river valley neighbourhoods (Figure).



Image courtesy of the City of Edmonton Archives EAM-85.



**Figure 7.** The Alberta Legislature  
Source: [Portraits and Panoramas of the Alberta Legislature on its 100th Birthday](#) | [Ryan Jackson/Edmonton Journal](#)

The River also played a role in the designation of Edmonton as the provincial capital in 1906 after the birth of the Province of Alberta. Interestingly, the river hill vantage point of the Alberta Legislature was chosen, in part, due to the prior decision of the Hudson Bay Company to move its main fort to this location, retreating from the floodplain following the severe floods of 1825 and 1830. The majestic, historic Alberta Legislature grounds today includes views to the North Saskatchewan River and valley below. The centre of democracy in the province of Alberta, the Legislature is also considered an architectural jewel of downtown Edmonton (LAA, 2023).



Today, interesting residential and municipal architecture overlooking the river valley abounds in Edmonton. The iconic former Hotel MacDonald (now the Fairmont Hotel) has been a fixture on the city skyline since its completion in 1915. The unique construction of the Shaw Conference Centre seems to rise right out of the river against the dramatic backdrop of pink glass and steel of Canada Place towering behind it. The Muttart Conservatory in the river valley also provides evidence of cultural expression within the river environment. Historic churches also are located in Edmonton including the 1874 Anglican Diocese. The incised river valley and its sinuous corridor helps create one of the most unique, intriguing urban skylines in North America.



The river, its associated floodplains and valley slopes create a spectacular “Ribbon of Green” bisecting the Edmonton Capital

Region. This has framed the City’s efforts towards preservation and stewardship of the river valley in recent decades. The river valley is the most distinctive feature of Edmonton, shaping land use patterns, open spaces, urban design and architecture in ways that give the City and Region its sense of place. This includes the contrasting juxtaposition of skyscrapers in downtown

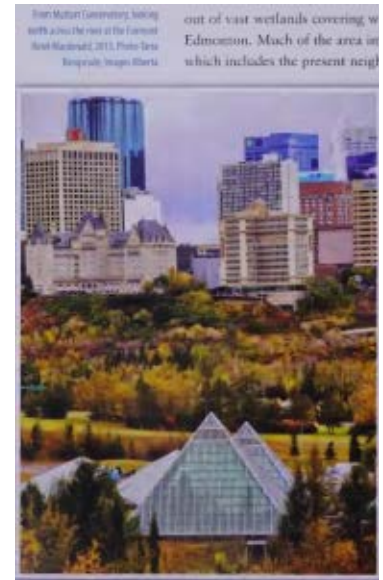
Edmonton at the top of the river valley edge with the forested river valley below.

Further upstream, at Rocky Mountain House, the first trading post was built in 1799. Over the next 76 years, forts here were abandoned, re-built and re-opened at this site. Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site was established for its role in the fur trade, association with the great mapmaker David Thompson who launched expeditions seeking passage to the west coast from here, and the site’s relationship with the Blackfoot peoples and the Piikani in particular.

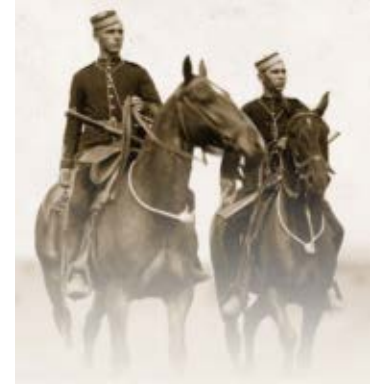
Settlement along the River was also facilitated by one of the most complex networks of interconnected overland trails in the West, linking the various inhabited regions of the North Saskatchewan watershed and beyond. The most prominent was the Saskatchewan Trail, also called, at various times, the Old Saskatchewan Trail, Edmonton Trail, the Hudson’s Bay Trail, the Company Trail and in more recent times, the Carlton Trail. Smoky Lake County has also designated surviving portions of this trail as a Municipal Historic Area under the *Alberta Historical Resources Act* (Smoky Lake County, 2021).

Over the centuries, the origin of various settlers who came to the region from abroad included:

- Early fur traders from New France, Britain, and the British Colonies including the Yankee south
- Explorers and researchers on scientific expeditions (e.g., Franklin, David Thompson, Palliser)
- Presbyterian, Methodist, Anglican, and Roman Catholic missionaries from western Europe
- Early entrepreneurs looking for gold and adventure
- The Métis (*‘children of the fur trade’*)



- Early European tourist adventurers
- The North-West Mounted Police
- River-boat and ferrymen
- Early Ukrainian settlers of the early 1900s– represented particularly well at the Victoria District National Historic Site
- Early Moravian and German settlers
- Immigration to Canada and Alberta has increasingly diversified the local population—a trend which continues today. Virtually all cultures are now represented, including, for example, Syrian and Ukrainian refugees who have fled conflict in their home countries in recent years.



**Figure 8.** Source: *The Fort Heritage Precinct - Fort Heritage Precinct*

*“My paternal Grandmother’s family was Métis - her maiden name was Coutu. Her family history was documented by Hector Coutu of Two Hills in 1980. My 4X Great Grandmother, Marie Ann Gabourey Lagimodiere, had the first ‘European’ child in Fort Edmonton. They then moved to Manitoba and were founders of the Red River Settlement - there she became the grandmother to Louis Riel. My family goes back generations along the N.Sask River and subsequently the Carlton Trail. These pathways were how my kinfolk traveled, earned their living, and where they settled. I did not learn I was Métis until very recently - it was a secret kept by our parent’s generation, who were able to pass for being Caucasian, and did not want to suffer the discrimination that followed the Northwest Resistance. In the early 1950’s they moved to Vancouver and started a new life.”*

– Public/Stakeholder Engagement Participant

### Steamships and River Transport Heritage

In June 1871, Hudson’s Bay Company Governor Sir Stafford Henry Northcote announced that *“Where possible, the brigades of York Boats would be replaced by steamers.”* By 1875, the first North Saskatchewan River sternwheeler, *The S. S. Northcote*, reached Edmonton from Grand Rapids. These wide, flat-bottomed motorized boats were designed to float on the surface and navigate shallow waters. Steamships provided the main form of transportation plying the waters of the River from the late 1800s up until 1918. In addition to cargo, they carried paying passengers as well. The *Northcote* was capable of transporting up to 50 passengers on its regular route between Edmonton and Prince Albert, Saskatchewan (Milholland, 2015). In 1882, the largest steamers to travel the river (the *Marquis* and the *Northwest*) were brought into service. The *Northwest* had 80 berths, two bridal suites and a piano. A brisk ferry business also operated up and down the river, such as the *Belle of Edmonton* ferry service run by John Walter (Milholland, 2015).



**Figure 9.** *S.S. Northcote steamship.*  
Source: *City of Edmonton Archives EA-10-1328. (Milholland, 2015)*

## Agricultural Heritage

The theme of Agricultural Extraction is well represented around the North Saskatchewan River (Alberta), as it traverses and weaves across the breadbasket of Canada. The river is in the centre of a region of remarkably fertile, productive lands, with deep, rich loamy black soils high in organic matter. Selected agricultural heritage facts directly related to the River include (Milholland, 2015):

- 1814: The garden at Edmonton House on the river flats produces two hundred bushels of potatoes, fifty bushels of turnips, eighty bushels of barley, and 2300 heads of cabbage
- 1846-1847: The flourmill at Edmonton grinds 15-16 bushels of grain per day, mostly grown on river flats
- 1919: Alberta's first farmer-organized Drainage District is established east of Edmonton at Holden



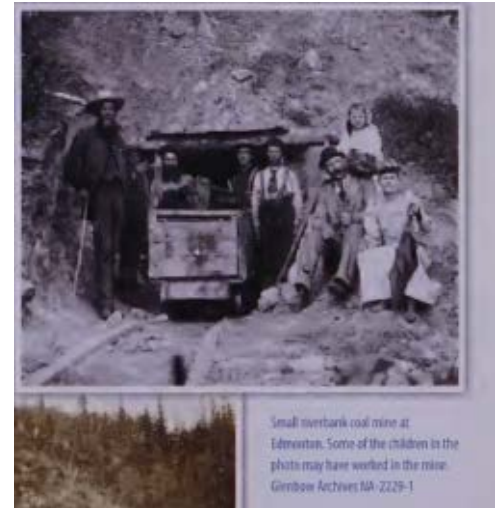
**Figure 10.** Gardening the fertile river flats, 1902  
(*City of Edmonton Archives EA-157-56*)

Agriculture has a strong, proud history, has been associated in many locations with the river and drainage patterns, and is part of the legacy and future of the region (EMRB, 2021).

## Industrial Heritage

A strong industrial heritage is also present along the River and its watershed. As early as 1830, coal was mined from seams exposed on the riverbanks, from Rocky Mountain House to Edmonton. Over 10 coal mines operated in Edmonton's river valley between 1840 up to the 1920s. The Brazeau Collieries National Historic Site near Nordegg produced over 9.6 million tons of coal between 1912 to 1955. At one point, it hosted the most productive briquette plant in North America and a thriving community of up to 3,000 people. The coal mining industry in the Wabamun subwatershed area began in the 1910s. The industry here grew into Canada's largest surface strip mine at Highvale prior to its closure in 2021 following conversion of the Keephills and Sundance power stations to natural gas feedstock.

In the 1860s, gold mining began in earnest along the North Saskatchewan River. Gold seekers near Edmonton washed out fine gold with a machine called a "grizzly", while prospectors could be found up and down the river from Victoria Settlement all the way to the Rockies.



Small overbank coal mine at Edmonton. Some of the children in the photo may have worked in the mine.  
Grimbow Archives NA-2228-1

Oil and gas industry heritage is also present along the river and throughout the watershed. The Leduc #1 well drilled in a barley field south of Devon on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1947, turned into a veritable "gusher", changing Alberta's economy forever almost overnight. Its discovery started billions of dollars of investments and massive immigration into Alberta. Nearby, the Town of Devon sprung up nearly overnight on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River to house Imperial Oil's workers. The Pembina Oil Field is also one of the largest conventional oil fields in Alberta. Following its discovery in 1953, the town of Drayton Valley boomed from a population of 75 to 2,000 in just one year.

In Edmonton in the late 1800s, many industries were set up directly along the River, taking advantage of water availability and power generation opportunities. Among these were a tannery, several brickyards, sawmills and lumber yards, meat packing plants, and the coal-fired power plant and wastewater treatment

plants at Rossdale. Icehouses were also built along the river, making use of winter river ice cut in large square blocks to keep animal carcasses cool.



**Figure 11.** *Bighorn Dam intake head gate house*

Alberta's Industrial Heartland is a 582 km<sup>2</sup> area directly along the North Saskatchewan River. It is home to 40 petrochemical industries, and over \$45 billion of investments, including oil refineries, bitumen upgraders, fertilizers, and polypropylene facilities. It is also the site of 2 refineries with carbon capture and storage facilities, and home to the world's largest CO<sub>2</sub> pipeline (AIHA, 2023). It also hosts the Edmonton Region Hydrogen HUB – the largest hub in Canada's developing low-carbon hydrogen economy – with a future wholesale market potential of up to \$100 billion per year (ERH2, 2023).

More recent hydropower developments have been significant. Transalta completed the Brazeau (1963) and Bighorn (1972) dams and related infrastructure, which today generate 350 MW and 120 MW of electricity.

The Brazeau dam and river is named after Joseph Brazeau - clerk with the Hudson's Bay Company and native linguist on the Palliser Expedition.

The Bighorn dam is named after the many Bighorn Sheep in the area.



## Conflict



*Mistahimaskwa, Big Bear  
1825—1888 PHOTO Canadian  
Heritage Archives*

Several recorded skirmishes, massacres, battles and other hostilities have occurred on, near, or in relation to the River. There is evidence of European-Indigenous conflict during the fur trade, as well as European-European and Indigenous-Indigenous conflict during that same era, especially prior to 1821. The North Saskatchewan River played key roles in transporting the Northwest Mounted Police to the west in 1874 to address unrest.

The river also played a role in the outcome of the North-West Resistance of 1885, and the tragic events at the Frog Lake National Historic Site in the same year. From April 30<sup>th</sup> to May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1885, General T.B. Strange at Fort Edmonton built barges to transport 224 men and one gun downriver to Fort Pitt to help quell the Northwest Resistance.

## *Frog Lake National Historic Site*

Just inside the Alberta border, the site of this tragic event is laden with memories of lives lived and lost. Frustrated with the Canadian Government, especially the provision of food rations, Kah-Paypamhcukwao, also known as Wandering Spirit, and other warriors took control of Mishtahimaskwa's (Big Bear's) Cree band, and came to Frog Lake on April 2, 1885, to take up issues with the Indian Agent. Tensions erupted in the small settlement and nine people were killed. [Frog Lake National Historic Site](#)

## The Arts

Stories, songs, traditions, and beliefs form part of our collective human heritage (CHRB, 2000), and there are many examples of the North Saskatchewan River directly or indirectly influencing the arts. This includes references to the river in musical lyrics and poetry.

***“Roll on North Saskatchewan  
Born in the Rockies when the ice age receded,  
In a Columbia glacier a mile above the sea;  
Through wild canyons, the newborn river twists and bends,  
Its journey will be long before it ends.***

***Kelsey, La Verendrye, the Blackfoot and the Cree  
All searched that river for their destiny;  
Near here David Thompson,  
His bride Charlotte by his side,  
Felt a country stirring as he looked across the great divide.***

***Still many miles to go before that river takes its rest,  
The story of this river is the story of the west.  
At Rocky Mountain House where  
The Nor-westers built a post,***

***They pushed their fur trade empire across to the coast;  
Trading with the Peigan and the Kootenays,  
They loaded their canoes to make the long paddle east.  
Across the flatlands where that widening river flowed,  
Through the territory of the buffalo,***

***By the time the steel rails stretched across Saskatchewan,  
The buffalo who drank from the riverbanks were gone.  
Roll on, roll on, roll on you North Saskatchewan.”***

“Roll on North Saskatchewan” - Words and Music by James Gordon



Lobstick Giveaway is a 72" by 48" work of art by Leah Marie Dorion. It was created in 2013 with acrylic mica flakes, pumice stone, and glass beads on canvas for the Gabriel Dumont Institute. The giveaway celebration and feasting was a fundamental aspect of the Lobstick pole ceremony. In this art work, Métis people of all ages, dressed in traditional clothing, make their contributions and offerings to the Lobstick pole celebration.

### ***Experience Métis Crossing***

Built on the original river lots of Métis settlers to this region in the late 1800s, Métis Crossing is home to Canada’s first and only major Métis cultural interpretive centre. This 512-acre site is designed to engage and excite visitors. Programming encourages active participation of visitors in activities that promote an appreciation of Métis people, customs, and celebrations.

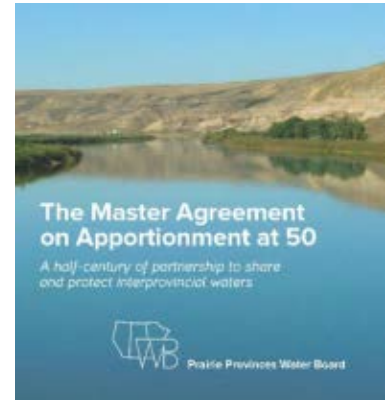
***“Along the North Saskatchewan River, the songs and stories of Alberta’s Métis and the voyageurs paddle along, just as they did many years ago.”***

***-Source: [Métis Crossing Promotional Video](#)***

## River Use, Environmental Regulations, Transboundary Agreements

The River and its watershed provides ample water supplies that have played an important, continuing role supporting many industries, agriculture, and municipal water supplies. It continues to provide a source of drinking water for well over 1 million people. Many associated environmental regulations – past, present and future – regulate water use and apportionment, water quality, and the health of the aquatic ecosystem. The first pollution control orders recorded related to the river were issued to the City of Edmonton by the Provincial Board of Health in the 1950s.

Importantly, kisiskâciwani-sîpiy flows downstream from Alberta into Saskatchewan and beyond, which has resulted in interprovincial water resource agreements. Established on May 11, 1948, the historic Prairie Provinces Water Board administers a water sharing agreement across Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, and hosts regular forums to discuss and resolve interprovincial water management issues. The associated Master Agreement on Apportionment specifies that Alberta must meet several requirements. Particularly relevant to kisiskâciwani-sîpiy, Alberta must allow a minimum of half of the natural flow of the river arising in Alberta to flow into Saskatchewan. There are also requirements for Alberta related to monitoring and reporting, water conservation measures, environmental flows, water quality, and consultation.



This river also provides an important legacy of lessons on flood disasters and corresponding responses. In 1825 and 1830, severe spring high water covered the floodplain around Fort Edmonton. This convinced the Hudson’s Bay Company to move their buildings from Rossdale Flats to higher ground just below where the Alberta Legislature sits today (Milholland, 2015). This may be the first recorded written example of a strategic retreat from a floodplain in Canada’s history.

A flood in 1899 caused serious damage on the Riverdale flats area, and damaged the main power plant west of Low Level Bridge. In response, engineers raised the piers of the Low Level Bridge piers by eight feet, providing an early example of engineering infrastructure to improve flood resilience.

In June 1915, the most destructive flood in modern times along kisiskâciwani-sîpiy occurred, completely demolishing the communities of Walterdale, Rossdale, Cloverdale, and Riverdale. A phone call from Rocky Mountain House was all the warning they had: “My God, Edmonton, look out; the river’s up 20 feet [6 metres] and still jumping!” At least 50 homes at Edmonton were swept away, 500 more were partly or completely submerged, 2,000 people were homeless and 35 city blocks were under water (Milholland, 2015). The aftermath of land use responses after this flood event is one of the key factors explaining how Edmonton’s Ribbon of Green came to be, and why the downtown core is outside of the river valley.



The 1916 *General Regulations of the Department of Education in Alberta* created in the immediate aftermath of the 1915 flood restricted school uses in floodplains. It stated that to obtain approval for any new school site by the Alberta Department of Education, the site will “as far as possible” be “in a dry, elevated position, admitting of easy drainage” (2c) and “removed from stagnant water” (2d) (Milholland, 2015).

Such examples of early efforts to plan, manage, and regulate land uses and infrastructure along rivers for flood resilience are part of Canada’s national river heritage history, and could have important lessons for climate resilience nationwide in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## 2.3 Recreational Heritage

Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy provides many river and land-based tourism and recreation opportunities. The river is capable of providing outstanding experiences for many diverse users and activities in wilderness, rural, and urban settings. The character of the river, adjacent lands, nearby communities, and tourism potential varies significantly along the length of the river in different reaches. Each reach provides river-based recreation opportunities commensurate with the local character of the river and surroundings.

The entire river affords countless, diverse opportunities for river travel and adventure – in Rocky Mountain, Boreal, and Prairie settings. River-related activities are numerous and include hiking, backpacking, horse packing, mountain biking, kayaking, canoeing, rafting, paddleboarding, river boating, rafting, competitive rowing, nature tours, fishing, camping, gold panning, riverside picnicking, cross-country skiing, dog sledding, tobogganning, winter hiking, and camping. There is an abundance of natural, quiet camping spots along the river and on river islands that help to facilitate multi-day canoe trips.

The wildest and most adventure-oriented reaches are in the west, closest to the river’s headwaters and along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. The central reaches, those in and around Edmonton, are the most developed and offer a mix of urban and rural visitor experiences. The experience of entering the urbanized reaches around Edmonton at the end of a multi-day river trip can feel like stepping out of the past into modern-day civilization. The reaches in the east are home to more pastoral and cultural landscapes and attractions.

Linked high quality cultural tourism activities such as historic wagon train reenactments, historic sternwheeler adventures, and historical voyageur canoeing are also present within and along Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy. At some locations, snowmobiling and all-terrain vehicles are popular activities with locals and tourists. Northern lights viewing along the river is also a specific experience growing in importance, particularly among international tourists (EMC, 2023)

Many river-related recreational facilities along the river have been spearheaded by provincial, municipal, and private interests. These include walking and hiking trails, foot bridges, nature observation sites, land and river touring, and amenities for seasonal river competitions and riverside entertainment.

The rich natural and cultural history of the river ties all the reaches within Alberta together and provide the foundation for compelling stories and unique destinations on and off the water. The story of the river, adjacent lands, and the people connected to it can be told along each reach, leveraging local assets, benefitting local communities, and helping visitors and locals alike understand the significance of the river. The river has always been a key travel route, first for Indigenous people through their traditional territories, then for fur trade and settler exploration, and later for recreation and industry. **Recreation and tourism along the North Saskatchewan can carry forward this long-established role of the river as gateway, and usher in a new role of river as a destination.**

### *Benefits of River Recreation*

Recreational activities provide many health, spiritual and intrinsic values and benefits for river users.

It also helps bring people closer to the river, stimulating awareness, education, and stewardship.

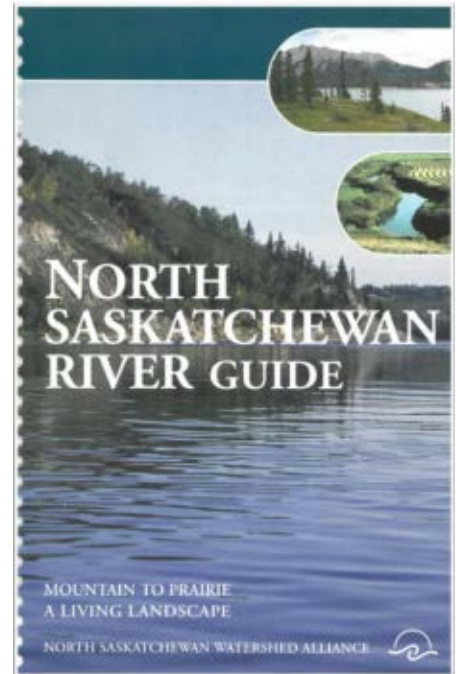
## Boating

The North Saskatchewan River provides opportunities for recreational activities such as canoeing and kayaking through a natural riverine landscape. There are places to launch canoes and other watercraft at river crossing sites. There are large stretches of the North Saskatchewan River that contain no dangerous rapids or waterfalls which makes the river ideal for novice paddlers to gain experience before tackling more challenging wilderness canoeing opportunities in other regions.

While most of the nominated river could be considered 'flatwater', there are class II rapids on the reach between Nordegg and Rocky Mountain House. More commonly, there are riffles where shallow swift running water crosses submerged sand and gravel bars.

Overall, the river provides a spectacular and varied wilderness and recreation route – navigable in the upper reaches with good white-water skills, and with opportunities across all reaches to experience a variety of boating and wilderness in remote, yet accessible locations.

The City of Edmonton is also home to the Edmonton Queen riverboat which offers tourists and locals the opportunity to sail on the North Saskatchewan River during warmer summer weather. It started to sail on the river in 1995 and has been an emblematic attraction in the heart of the city ever since. Edmonton also hosts an annual dragon boat festival on the North Saskatchewan River.



## Fishing and Hunting

The river has long been used for recreational fishing. The river and its associated watersheds are home to spawning and fishing grounds for bass, walleye, perch, and sturgeon. Angling occurs mainly at river-crossing sites due to the lack of public access and difficult terrain along most sections of the river. Fish species popular with anglers include mountain whitefish, northern pike, burbot, goldeye/mooneye, lake sturgeon, and walleye.

The river also supports a wide diversity and variety of waterfowl. Hunting, within the regulated hunting season, is a popular recreational activity in the river valley, including waterfowl, deer, and pheasant, outside of urban areas.



## Natural Heritage Appreciation

Even in the most urbanized reaches, the river valley continues to provide feelings of a relatively intact riverside forest and valley system that is highly accessible to over a million residents. In fact, Edmonton's "Ribbon of Green" anchored by the river provides the largest system of contiguous urban parklands in Canada, covering over 160 km of maintained pathways, 20 major parks, and 18,000 acres which is 12 times larger than Central Park in New York City. There are also plans to create a continuous trail network of over 100 km from Devon to Fort Saskatchewan. This provides an urban oasis of nature and recreation, and an extensive network of trails, boat launches, and amenities providing a wide range of high quality experiences.



The North Saskatchewan River valley provides opportunities for outdoor education and chances to study native vegetation, birds, and mammals. Ongoing initiatives including habitat enhancement, naturalization, and riparian restoration of the river valley. These activities also demonstrate a commitment to improve the quality of the North Saskatchewan as a recreational and educational resource.

The biologically diverse, species abundant riparian and river valley ecosystems along the river is worth protecting. The river supports a diversity of wildlife habitat and is home to several fish species, waterfowl, raptors (including eagles, hawks, and falcons), and other bird species including warblers, songbirds, herons, and egrets. The region is also noted for its species rich parkland and mixedwood habitats.

### **Cultural Heritage Appreciation**

Special events, festivals, landmarks, and museums reflect the significance of the river in the history of the communities along the North Saskatchewan River. Parks along the riverbank host many events and festivals that are major tourist attractions for the city of Edmonton for example. These events include the dragon boat festival and fireworks. The programming at historic sites such as Fort Edmonton is especially noteworthy.

Tourism is a multi-million-dollar industry in the region and a major economic engine in many communities. Local sightseeing tours in Edmonton offer spectacular views of the river by boat, in addition to providing opportunities for wedding ceremonies, receptions, galas and meetings. Eco-tourism, or nature-based tourism, is a growing industry which makes use of the natural landscape along the river. Annual running competitions, fundraising events, and various riverside festivals also occur, including the Edmonton Folk Music Festival, Heritage Days Festival, and Canada Day events, that allow for community celebration and contribute to Edmonton being well known as a “Festival City”.

**PHOTO: EDMONTON FOLK FEST**

**PHOTO: EDMONTON DRAGON BOAT EVENTS**

**BOX: IMPORTANCE OF RIVER SAFETY BOX(?) - CITY OF EDMONTON**

## 2.4 Natural Heritage

Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy was nominated based primarily on cultural values. However, the river also reflects many interesting, significant natural heritage values. As it descends from mountain to prairie, Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy includes a remarkable variety of interesting, unusual, and rare natural features. An outstanding array of biological, evolutionary, fluvial and earth history processes are reflected, as the river cascades through the Rocky Mountains and Foothills, and meanders across parklands, settled regions, and prairie landscapes.

### Key Natural Heritage Gaps Filled by Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System

- The nominated section is an outstanding example of a large river in the Boreal Plain as well as the Prairies - filling a key gap underrepresented in the national system (CHRS, 2016).

#### PHOTO: BOREAL PLAIN RIVER LANDSCAPE NEAR RMH/DRAYTON, e.g., MILL ISLAND?

- Associated water bodies include eutrophic (high-nutrient) aquatic lakes and wetlands of the Interior Plains identified as a national gap in representation (CHRS, 2016).
- Uniquely provides a link from its Rocky Mountain headwaters to Hudson's Bay.
- Contains many outstanding examples of river environments, including significant, unique, or rare biotic and abiotic natural features and processes.
- Contains habitat for many rare or endangered plants, wildlife, and fish, including Lake Sturgeon.

### Hydrology and Water Quality

Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy uniquely links the headwaters of the Rocky Mountains to Hudson's Bay (**Figure 12**). Downstream from Alberta, the river's main stem joins the South Saskatchewan River near Prince Albert. Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy then flows across Saskatchewan and Manitoba, before emptying into Hudson's Bay via the Nelson River. The North Saskatchewan River watershed covers over 122,800 km<sup>2</sup> – an area almost as large as New Brunswick and Nova Scotia combined, while the Hudson Bay drainage basin covers about 39% of Canada (**Figure 12**).

The average flow volume on the North Saskatchewan River at Edmonton is approximately 241 m<sup>3</sup>/s. Though the river rarely freezes entirely, it does experience seasonal variations, with periods of high flow through May to September and low flow from October to April. Most of the water in the river originates in the headwaters in the Rocky Mountains and the Foothills, with over 87% of the average annual flow at the Saskatchewan border generated upstream of Drayton Valley (Golder, 2008).



**Figure 12.** *Drainage regions of Canada* ([statcan.gc.ca](http://statcan.gc.ca))

Water quality in Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy varies seasonally and has improved in recent decades. The river tends to be very turbid, carrying high suspended sediment loads - especially in early summer. The river's water is also relatively 'hard', with total dissolved solids averaging over 100 mg/L.

Pollution from municipal wastewater, industry, agriculture, and other sources has been an issue since at least the 1940s. A 1951 water quality report noted elevated bacteria, extremely low dissolved oxygen, odour problems, visible garbage, grease and oil in and around Edmonton (EPCOR, 2020). However, many wastewater treatment improvements made since then have improved water quality in the river. This includes several recent municipal wastewater upgrades completed in Edmonton and the Capital Region from 1997 to 2005 – which include the introduction of UV disinfection and biological nutrient removal processes. Water quality monitoring since 1987 shows marked reductions in bacteria, *Cryptosporidium*, phosphorus, and nitrogen in recent decades, especially downstream from Edmonton (NSWA, 2005; EPCOR, 2020; PPWB, 2016; Anderson, 2012). Water quality upstream from Edmonton at Devon also improved slightly from 1987 to 2011 (Anderson, 2012; EPCOR, 2020).

### Physiography and River Morphology

Physiographic regions / subregions along the river's length includes the prairie Interior Plain / Alberta Plain, and a portion of the Cordillera / Eastern Range (Bird, 1980; Bostock, 1964). Westernmost reaches of the river range from 1200 -1400 m above sea level in the Rocky Mountains, dropping to 850 m near Edmonton, and 580 m at the border with Saskatchewan.



Figure 13. Elevation across the North Saskatchewan River (NSWA, 2012)

The North Saskatchewan River valley has a wide floodplain base, with concave walls typical of post-glacial meltwater channels. In some areas, the river valley has only narrow floodplains between high embankments. The river's channel patterns vary, alternating between branching and meandering, with some portions taking on braided forms. In areas where glacial till is coarser and less prone to erosion, the channel takes on a more sinuous pattern. Artificial elongated lakes have formed behind both the Bighorn Dam and Brazeau Dam. The Abraham Lake reservoir behind the Bighorn Dam is Alberta's largest man-made lake with an area of 54 km<sup>2</sup>.

Many features of kisiskâciwani-sîpiy reflect key sediment transport, deposition, and erosion processes. Surficial geology includes a mix of unconsolidated materials varying in size from fine silt to large boulders. In the riverbed, water action creates sandy flats and gravel bars, and carries finer materials downstream to be deposited in slower moving reaches downstream. Bedrock consists of interconnected sandstone bodies, surrounded by mudstone, siltstone, and coal. Areas of abundant clay and silt layers deposited in post-glacial lakes are often overlain by more recent sand and gravel deposited by flowing water. High sediment loads, variable discharge and high species diversity in the North Saskatchewan River suggest that this river is a middle order riverine system. Within the river valley, associated wetlands are often former meander scars regenerated by spring runoff, river floods, and seepage from the main channel.

### *Glacial Lake Edmonton*

When the last glaciers stopped advancing, melting ice formed a large lake over 15 m deep in the vicinity of Edmonton and further south. There is evidence that this huge lake drained abruptly, carrying a thousand times the average volume of the River today, and huge icebergs up to three stories high (Milholland, 2015). Former oversized abandoned channels of the main river stem represent an outstanding, significant example of the geological processes of surficial material formation through inundation and glacial melting.

At Whirlpool Ridge in the uppermost reach, the river cuts through ancient Precambrian rock at least 600 million years old. Extensive braided channels and snyes can be found in the upper reaches, while middle to lower reaches include wide meander bends, tall sandstone cliffs, and low gravel shores. Fossilized plants can also be found in shale upstream of Edmonton.



*Meandering channel of the North Saskatchewan River as it enters the Edmonton area.*



*Braided channel of the North Saskatchewan River*

### **Air Quality**

Air quality in the region surrounding the North Saskatchewan River is monitored and reported on by three Airsheds: Alberta Capital Airshed, Fort Air Partnership and West Central Airshed Society. Wildfires, industrial activities, and vehicle emissions can contribute to periodic air quality issues. Along the river and the broader region, poor air quality events present risks to both natural heritage integrity and the quality of river recreation experiences. At times, pollutants of concern such as particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and ground-level ozone exceed objectives and guidelines for air quality. If air quality presents a high or very high risk to health, this can trigger air quality advisories in the Edmonton Region, Industrial Heartland, or other locations. In particular, individuals with asthma or other underlying health conditions, young children, and the elderly are more vulnerable to poor air quality (AAC, 2022).



*Metasequoia*

### **Biotic Environments**

In addition to traversing the Boreal Plains and Prairie ecozones of Canada, the river also flows through the Lower Foothills, Central and Dry Mixedwood, and Central Parkland natural ecoregions of Alberta. The North Saskatchewan River valley displays excellent representative examples of the natural features of these distinct ecozones and ecoregions.

Natural flora and fauna supported by the North Saskatchewan River's environments are many and varied, and include confirmed populations of species at risk. The river's largely undeveloped riparian ecosystems and river valley corridor supports abundant plant and animal species connecting diverse natural regions, through an extensive, relatively intact natural river valley corridor. It forms part of a bioregional conservation

network of core wild areas, buffer zones and corridors of suitable habitat including the river itself, and associated wetlands, forests, and shrub/grass ecosystems. In spite of over 100 years of human development this vast corridor still retains significant biodiversity and natural phenomena, formations and features that are often compromised in other river systems.

The river bisects or is in close proximity to at least thirty Provincial Environmentally Significant and Protected Areas, including but not limited to: Kootenay Plains, Pembina Field, Buck Lake, Eagle Point/Blue Rapids, and Burtonsville Island. Habitats for a diversity of native plant species are represented. While the landscape surrounding the river in middle and downstream reaches is often dominated by crop production and livestock grazing, there remains remnants of more natural vegetation in the steep slopes of the North Saskatchewan River Valley.

PHOTO OF ECOSYSTEM/PROTECTED AREA e.g., BURTONSVILLE ISLAND OR KOOTENAY PLAINS

### Vegetation and Rare Plants

River and riparian environments along Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy are home to plants such as sedges, grasses, rushes, shrubs, and trees. Tree and shrub species include white spruce, balsam poplar, trembling aspen, paper birch, willows, wolf willows, chokecherry, pin cherry, low bush cranberry, dogwood, bracted honeysuckle, Saskatoon berry, buffaloberry, and prickly rose. Forb and grass species include showy aster, wild lily of the valley, northern bedstraw, Canada anemone, wild strawberry, goldenrod, slender wheatgrass, and rough fescue. Whitebark pine and limber pine are two endangered tree species whose range overlaps the upper reaches of the North Saskatchewan River. One limber pine near the river is over 1,000 years old.

PHOTO OF 1,000 YEAR OLD LIMBER PINE

Rare plants found along the river include mosses, lichen, ferns, orchids, and grasses. Specific rare plant species supported by the river and its adjacent lands include the dwarf Canadian primrose, slender neck fern, Small Yellow Lady's Slipper, Indian Milk-Vetch, and Slender Mouse-ear Cress which is listed as Threatened. *Miehllichhoferia macrocarpa* (Hook) is a rare moss found in the upper reaches. The river's riparian environment also supports a disjunct population of wood anemone flowers near Nordegg, with the nearest similar population found in eastern Saskatchewan.

PHOTO OF RARE PLANT

## Fauna

The North Saskatchewan River provides a significant wildlife corridor for the movement of animals between the prairie and the boreal forest, especially as it traverses through urban areas. The majority of the nominated section of the river has been classified as a key wildlife and biodiversity zone. Key wildlife and biodiversity zones are intended to prevent loss and fragmentation of habitat; prevent short and long-term all-weather public vehicle access; prevent sensory disturbance during periods of thermal or nutritional stress on wildlife; and prevent the development of barriers to wildlife corridors. This designation is a consolidation of previous Key Ungulate Areas, Key Ungulate Winter ranges, and Class C - Key Wildlife and Watercourse areas.

Wildlife habitats supported by the North Saskatchewan River and adjacent river valley lands are also somewhat unique, since some wildlife species are located at the southernmost part of their range, while others are found at the northern limits of their range. Wildlife supported includes large mammals such as wolf, cougar, and bear, as well as moose, elk, mountain goats, and bighorn sheep. Other species supported include fisher, fox, jackrabbit, badger, beaver, coyote, mule deer, white-tailed deer, and numerous waterfowl and bird species.

### PHOTO OF MAMMAL(S)

Many species of birds call the North Saskatchewan River valley home. Some bird species of note observed along the river include regionally sensitive bird species including the harlequin duck, alder flycatcher, least flycatcher, pileated woodpecker, whooping crane, barred owl, short-eared owl, common nighthawk, loggerhead shrike, great blue heron, bank swallow, sharp tailed grouse, piping plover, and American white pelican. **Birds in the region include the house wren, western kingbird, and western meadowlark.** The river is also close to regionally sensitive raptor range for the golden eagle and peregrine falcon. There are hibernation sites for regionally sensitive garter snakes, especially in the lowermost reaches, and regionally sensitive wetland species such as northern leopard frogs and boreal toads.

### PHOTO OF BIRD(S)

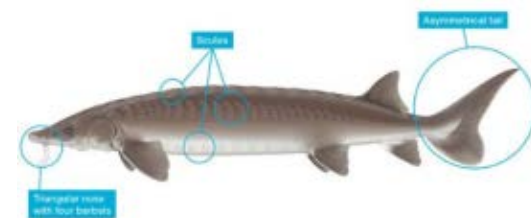
Downstream prairie reaches of the North Saskatchewan River are home to over 37 fish species, such as northern pike, walleye, goldeye, yellow perch and lake sturgeon. Regionally sensitive fish species include sauger, spoonhead sculpin, bull trout, and lake sturgeon. Bull trout can be found in the portions of the river associated with the Brazeau and Bighorn dams, Brazeau reservoir and Abraham Lake, which is listed as a threatened species on COSEWIC. Lake sturgeon, which is listed as threatened under the Alberta Wildlife Act, has also been found in the North Saskatchewan River. Sturgeon spawning habitats occur in several areas upstream from Edmonton, most notably at “sturgeon hole”.

### BOX: STURGEON IN THE NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER

The prehistoric lake sturgeon remains an Endangered species. This massive fish can live up to 150 years in the wild and weigh up to 400 pounds total. According to provincial estimates, up to 5,000 sturgeon live throughout the watershed, and numbers have rebounded significantly in recent years, due to both improving water quality and fisheries management initiatives.

**Sources:** CBC News: [Sturgeon make a comeback in North Saskatchewan River](#) | CBC News;

Gov. of AB <https://www.alberta.ca/lake-sturgeon.aspx>



**In conclusion, the natural features of the river remain relatively intact, and growing in importance. In particular, opportunities for natural heritage appreciation and stewardship are extraordinary, due to proximity to large, growing, diverse populations and major tourism destinations.**

## 2.5 Heritage Integrity Assessment

Appendix F of the CHRS Principles, Procedures and Operational Guidelines (CHRB, 2023) outlines the basis for evaluating heritage ‘integrity’. The assessment provided in the tables below assert strongly that the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta fully meets the majority of the integrity requirements of the CHRS, and substantially meets all of the integrity requirements in one way or another. Furthermore, the act of designation itself is likely to contribute to maintaining or enhancing the river’s heritage integrity.

The river does certainly remain vulnerable to change and degradation. Cultural heritage integrity could be vulnerable to the loss or attrition of historical knowledge, cultural fragmentation, loss of social cohesion, and lack of education and awareness. Natural heritage values remain vulnerable to habitat fragmentation and loss, pollution, dams and hydropower generation, invasive species, wildfires and climate change. The quality of river recreational experiences could also deteriorate as the river setting changes. However, many remain hopeful that with collaborative stewardship, continued improvements can be achieved.

### Cultural Integrity Guidelines

Guideline (CHRS 2023)	Assessment and Notes / Justification
<b>CI.1.</b> The nominated section is of sufficient size to include significant representations of all of the features, activities or other phenomena which give the river its outstanding cultural value	<b>Fully met</b> - Designation will enhance, promote, and conserve river-associated cultural integrity, by linking together multiple national and provincial historic sites and resources in a linked thematic framework.
<b>CI.2.</b> The visual character of the nominated section enables uninterrupted appreciation of at least one of the periods of the river's historical importance	<b>Substantially met</b> - the vast majority remains largely uninterrupted and provides for extensive appreciation of multiple periods in the river’s history.
<b>CI.3.</b> The key artifacts and sites comprising the cultural values for which the river is nominated are unimpaired by impoundments and human land uses; and	<b>Substantially met</b> - impoundments at the Bighorn and Brazeau dams have not significantly affected key artifacts and sites along the extent of nominated river.
<b>CI.4.</b> The water quality of the nominated section does not detract from the visual character or the cultural experience provided by its cultural values.	<b>Fully met</b> - Water quality trends have been improving, and seasonally high turbidity events are a natural feature of the river.

## Recreational Integrity Guidelines

Guideline (CHRS 2023)	Assessment and Notes / Justification
<p><b>RI.1.</b> The river possesses water of a quality suitable for contact recreational activities, including those recreational opportunities for which it is nominated</p>	<p><b>Fully met in most reaches, most of the time / substantially met throughout entire river</b> The North Saskatchewan River’s water quality is sufficient for many recreational activities, including canoeing, kayaking, and fishing.</p>
<p><b>RI.2.</b> The river’s visual appearance is capable of providing river travelers with a continuous natural experience, or a combined natural and cultural experience, without significant interruption by modern human intrusions</p>	<p><b>Fully met</b> – even within Edmonton city limits, the river valley largely remains a natural oasis with few intrusions, allowing travelers to “paddle into the past” and get a sense of what early travellers experienced. Work should continue to provide space for ceremony, spiritual, and traditional relations with the river. Naturalization and restoration work along the riverbank also demonstrates a commitment to improve and conserve the quality of the river and river valley.</p>
<p><b>RI.3.</b> The river is capable of supporting recreational uses without significant loss of, or impact on, its natural and cultural values or its visual character.</p>	<p><b>Fully met</b> – This is an extensive river with many different recreational settings and experiences. Although the nature of experiences differ by reach, visual character of river landscapes and associated experiences will largely remain intact for the foreseeable future.</p>

INSERT REC PHOTO



## Natural Integrity Guidelines

Guideline (CHRS 2023)	Assessment and Notes / Justification
<p><b>NI.1.</b> The nominated section is of sufficient size to include significant representations of all of the natural processes, features, or other phenomena which give the river its outstanding natural value</p>	<p><b>Fully met</b> - captures diverse ecosystem types including the Rockies and Foothills, Boreal Plain, and transitional Parkland and Prairies</p>
<p><b>NI.2.</b> The nominated section includes those ecosystem components which contribute significantly to the provision of habitat for species in need of protection</p>	<p><b>Fully met</b> - The river, adjacent wetlands, oxbows, and riparian forests provide habitat for many rare bird, animal, plant, and fish species (e.g., critical habitat for Sturgeon).</p>
<p><b>NI.3.</b> There are no human-made impoundments within the nominated section</p>	<p><b>Not met</b> - The Bighorn Dam is located within the nominated section. However, the majority of nominated reaches have no impoundments. In addition, higher winter water flows due to the dam help to dilute wastewater effluent downstream.</p>
<p><b>NI.4.</b> All key elements and ecosystem components are unaffected by impoundments located outside the nominated section</p>	<p><b>Substantially met</b> - Brazeau Dam is located on a tributary and likely has some negative impacts, but also contributes to improved water quality downstream, particularly in winter.</p>
<p><b>NI.5.</b> The water in the nominated section is uncontaminated to the extent that its natural aquatic ecosystem is intact</p>	<p><b>Substantially met</b> - Water quality is within provincial water quality standards, and has improved over recent decades. Fish and aquatic benthic invertebrates indicating ecosystem integrity are also present.</p>
<p><b>NI.6.</b> The natural aesthetic character of the nominated section is free of, or not adversely affected by, human developments.</p>	<p><b>Substantially met</b> - The natural aesthetics of most reaches of the River corridor are intact, with little development visible from the river, and formal protections in several provincial and municipal parks. Even in urbanized reaches in and around Edmonton, the River Valley Conservation Coalition and Ribbon of Green Plan help to maintain natural aesthetics in most locations.</p>

## 2.6 Overview & Summary of Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy's Heritage Values

- The river played a key role in Indigenous cultures, including creation stories, ceremonies, gathering places, trade and transport, medicines and foods
- Associated with a long history of interactions between different peoples and cultures, including periods of cooperation and conflict
- A major historic fur trade and travel route to the heart of North America, reflected by historic figures such as David Thompson and the Palliser Expedition, and historic sites such as Buckingham House, Victoria District, Fort Edmonton, and Rocky Mountain House
- The 718 km river segment represents 55% of Canada's 12th longest river, and 28% of Canada's 2<sup>nd</sup> longest river system (Nelson-Saskatchewan)
- Representation of Edmonton as the capital of Alberta, whose history and land use patterns were shaped directly by the river
- The North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System is the largest urban park in Canada, with over 160 kilometers of maintained pathways and trails
- A spectacular and varied wilderness and recreation route – navigable in the upper reaches with good white-water skills, and opportunities across all reaches to experience a variety of boating and wilderness in remote yet accessible locations
- A wide range of recreational activities and experiences within wilderness, rural and urban settings
- Reflects many outstanding, unique natural heritage features, including rare/threatened plants, mammals, birds and fish including lake sturgeon

This designation will complement the upstream river section in Banff National Park already designated as a heritage river. It may also catalyze future additions downstream into Saskatchewan and Manitoba. **In conclusion, the heritage significance of this river is important and growing. Designation as a heritage river will fill critical national gaps in Canada's heritage rivers system, and help provide a blueprint for coordinated actions across many groups into the future.**



Sunrise on the NSR, Ceyana Canoe Club, 2021

**Figure 14.** Photo option – Sunrise on the NSR – Ceyana Canoe Club, 2021  
Source: Smoky Lake County Strategic Plan 2023-2025



*Contemporary river view east from Fort George & Buckingham House Provincial Historic Site, near Elk Point.  
Kyle Schole photo.*

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## 3 A Heritage Strategy for Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy

This section provide a **strategic framework** including a **vision and principles, program area goals, and implementation actions** that provide a blueprint to guide ongoing and future implementation efforts. By implementing coordinated actions, negative risks can be minimized, and heritage benefits achieved.

### 3.1 Stewarding the River as a Canadian Heritage River: Vision and Principles

***VISION: Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy’s diverse heritage values are recognized and stewarded, strengthening thriving communities connected by the river’s landscapes and history.***

#### **PRINCIPLES**

At the heart of this heritage strategy are eight principles, echoing the Canadian Heritage Rivers System strategic plan, but adapted to a “made-in-Alberta” approach specific to this river and its peoples.

**Recognition:** Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy is celebrated as a symbolic Canadian Heritage River within Alberta. Existing jurisdictions and rights, authorities, and responsibilities are fully recognized.

**Respect:** Rivers are for everyone, and respect for Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy and its diverse users is critical. All Indigenous, community, landowner, and individual rights, concerns, and perspectives will be respected.

**Reconciliation:** The Heritage Strategy for Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy recognizes and honours the special relationships between Indigenous peoples and rivers, and cultivates respectful spaces for dialogue and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous citizens for our common future.

**Integrity:** Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy is stewarded over time to meet integrity guidelines for cultural heritage, natural heritage, and recreation, while leveraging Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding.

**Sustainability:** A healthy river is essential to deliver cultural, recreational, and ecological services. Stewardship by all is essential to long-term sustainability, benefitting both current and future generations.

**Voluntary Participation:** Local citizens, communities, and grassroots-driven volunteer organizations are the core champions taking actions to promote, steward, and care for Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy.

**Leadership:** Leaders throughout the region provide clear support towards river heritage and stewardship initiatives in their jurisdiction, including monitoring, reporting, regulatory operations and stewardship.

**Collaboration & Partnerships:** Strive to inform, inspire, and involve residents and visitors to connect with the river’s heritage and share in its safekeeping. Education, awareness, and action are critical interrelated components of successful river stewardship and wise management.

#### **GOALS AND ACTIONS**

Succinct goals and key implementation actions have been developed for each heritage theme. Actions listed are not a complete inventory, but a sampling and a blueprint providing guideposts. The listing of actions and lead agencies is not intended to be exclusionary. Stewardship partners will include many governments, First Nations, stakeholders and citizens, landowners, industries, citizens, and other groups, who all play a role in stewarding and promoting the heritage values of this special river.

## 3.2 Cultural Heritage Goals and Actions

### GOAL: Recognize and steward the diverse cultural heritage associated with kisiskâciwani-sîpiy.

KEY ACTIONS	Timing*	Lead
Unveil a commemorative historic plaque during a joint public ceremony in Smoky Lake County.	Short-term	Alberta Government, Parks Canada
Open <a href="#">kihcihkaw askî (Sacred Land)</a> in Whitemud Park, Edmonton. This site will host spiritual ceremonies, sweat lodges, cultural camps, talking circles, and learning.	Short-term (Summer 2023)	Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre, City of Edmonton
Promote, steward, and enhance diverse cultural heritage attractions and interpretive opportunities, linked in a river-wide thematic framework.	Ongoing	Multiple (Parks Canada, etc)
Establish a National Urban Park in Edmonton, including enhanced cultural heritage interpretive displays.	Medium term?	Parks Canada, City of Edmonton
Research opportunities for hands-on historic site rehabilitation and associated educational opportunities.	Ongoing	Academia, Education sectors
Provide educational opportunities for communities to learn about river heritage and stewardship opportunities	Ongoing?	Education sector, RiverWatch Alberta
Integrate river cultural heritage goals into land use plans, policies, and procedures, including municipal plans and the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan	Ongoing	Municipalities, Government of Alberta
Explore the potential for supplementary downstream heritage river designation in Saskatchewan and beyond	Medium-term?	PSRB, Gov. of Sask.
Other provincial/COE/NGO heritage initiatives? Regional ag. Strategy? Art display in Art Gallery of Alberta possibility? NSRB Flyover video? NSWA Indigenous Engagement Strategy? Keepers of the Water? Suggest consultation with the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC)		

\*Anticipated timing windows include: **Short-Term (2023-24); Medium-Term (2025-2030), and Long-Term (2030-2040);**

'Ongoing' refers to repetitive operational program activities.



*"This is our mosque, this is our temple, this is our cathedral. Our walls are these river banks. Our elders remember stories from their grandparents stopping here, picking berries and harvesting plants with medicinal value." - Lewis Cardinal (from CBC news story:*

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/kihciy-askiy-whitemud-park-fred-campion-lewis-cardinal-indigenous-1.6433013>)

**What actions will YOU or your organization take, to experience, conserve, or restore the cultural heritage of kisiskâciwani-sîpiy?**

### 3.3 Recreation and Tourism Goals and Actions

**GOAL: Promote kisiskâciwani-sîpiy as a diverse recreational amenity and destination, compatible with the natural and cultural heritage values of the river.**

KEY ACTIONS	Timing*	Lead
Establish a River Tourism Development Task Force for kisiskâciwani-sîpiy, focused on the core areas of water-based tourism, outdoor adventure tourism, nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, and Indigenous tourism	??	Province?
Inventory river access points, prioritize key locations, and invest in targeted improvements while ensuring safety	??	Province? Municipalities, Alberta Transportation? private land owners?
Develop signature/epic multi-day river heritage tours	??	Tour operators?
Tell the story of the river in both hard copy and digital formats, linked to updated river guides, trip planning resources, etc.. (is this really all that different from the existing Mark's Guide? And WHO exactly would produce/update/distribute?)	??	??
Promote the river as a sport fishery	??	GOA?
Complete the trail sections linking Devon to Fort Saskatchewan along Amisko Wacîw Mêskanaw (Beaver Hill Road)	??	River Valley Alliance & partners
Complete the planned Rocky Mountain House to Nordegg Trail (Reach 2)	??	Clearwater County
Complete the STEP Region Tourism Opportunity Identification and Destination Development Strategy Also, Travel Alberta “embarked on completing Ten ‘Tourism Development Zone Plans’ Is this the same as Expedition’s: “Tourism product development plan” and/or “Leverage Travel Alberta Tourism Development Zone projects to align tourism opportunities along the river and identify shared priorities across different reaches), or no? Do we reference the regionalized separate ones e.g., Northeast Lakelands tourism Development Zone Smoky Lake Cluster? Or is that getting too specific to the exclusion of other regions (e.g., David Thompson region? Edmonton region? Others....?)	??	Tourism Alberta?
Identify appropriate areas for new campsites that avoid sensitive ecosystems	??	??
Identify long stretches of the river where bail-out points would improve the safe and flexible use of the river	??	??
Establish a National Urban Park in Edmonton to...rec/tourism focus	??	??
Dark sky preserve?	??	??
Integrate river recreation and tourism goals into land use plans, policies, and procedures, including municipal plans and the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan	??	Municipalities, Government of Alberta

\*Anticipated timing windows include: Short-Term (2023-24); Medium-Term (2025-2030), and Long-Term (2030-2040); ‘Ongoing’ refers to repetitive operational program activities.

*What actions will YOU or your organization take, to promote the recreation and tourism potential for high quality experiences associated with kisiskâciwani-sîpiy?*

There remain many opportunities to enhance and grow cultural and Indigenous tourism, ecotourism, and adventure tourism, as well as specific experiences such as northern lights viewing along the River.



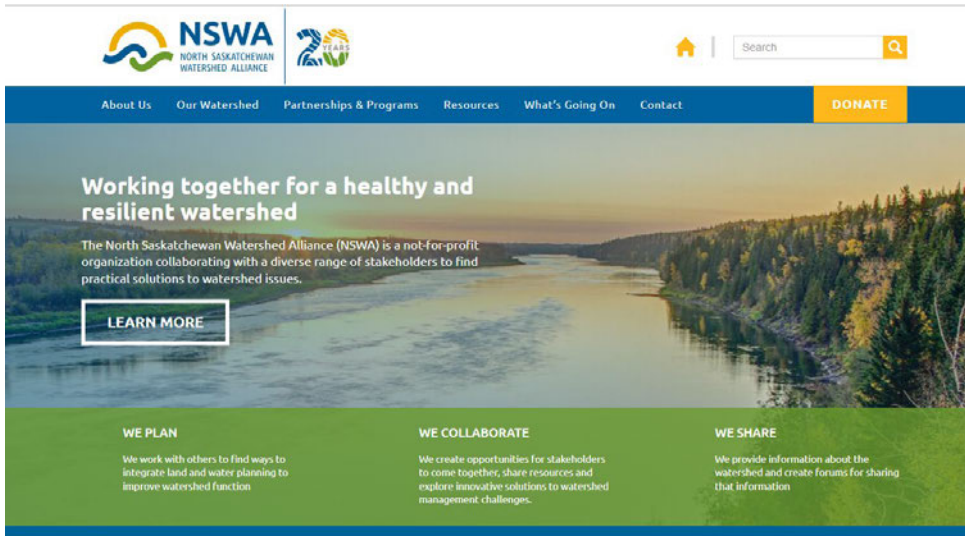
### 3.4 Natural Heritage Goals and Actions

**GOAL: Maintain or improve the natural heritage of kisiskâciwani-sîpiy, including its watershed, greenways, flora, and fauna.**

*What actions will YOU or your organization take to experience, conserve, or restore the natural heritage of kisiskâciwani-sîpiy?*

KEY ACTIONS	Timing*	Lead
Implement the Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) and monitor progress over time	Ongoing	NSWA
Update the State of the Watershed Report for the North Saskatchewan River Basin (Alberta)	Medium?	NSWA
Complete the update of lake sturgeon population status throughout the river (GoA, 2023)	Short-term	Alberta government, DFO
Complete & implement the Ribbon of Green, Watershed Management, Greener as We Grow, and related initiatives	Medium-term	City of Edmonton
Protect & restore ecological connectivity along the river through the National Program for Ecological Corridors	??	Parks Canada, others
Plan and deliver a headwaters tour	Short-term	Headwaters Alliance
Launch 'The Healthy Rivers Ecosystem Assessment System (THREATS)' platform	??	EPCOR
Execute the Beaver Hills wetland inventory, rural residential stewardship program, and other projects in the area	??	Beaver Hills Biosphere Reserve
Establish a National Urban Park in Edmonton	Medium term	Parks Canada, <b>City of Edmonton</b>
Integrate Aquatic Ecosystem Health outcomes in the Designated Industrial Zone (DIZ) pilot, Industrial Heartland	??	Government of Alberta, NSWA
CABIN Eastern Slopes Collaborative community-based monitoring collaborative	??	<b>Living Lakes Canada</b>
Regional lake stewardship support and restoration projects		Lake stewardship groups (e.g., Wabamun WC), NSWA
Complete the reclamation of the largest surface coal mine in Canada (Wabamun - Highvale)	<b>Long-term</b>	TransAlta Utilities
Conduct applied watershed science research and knowledge <b>mobilization / sharing</b>	Ongoing	<b>Academia (U of A), NSERC, Alberta Innovates, fRI Water &amp; Fish program</b>
<b>Also: explore opportunities for citizen science?</b>		
Complete and implement the North Saskatchewan River Basin Wetland Strategy	??	NSWA, others
Complete and implement a Riparian Health Action Plan, building on the 2018 <a href="#">Riparian Web Portal</a>	??	NSWA, Cows and Fish
Continue monitoring and reporting on ambient air quality	<b>Ongoing</b>	FAP, ACA, WCAS
Integrate river-related natural heritage goals into land use plans, policies, and procedures, including municipal plans and the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan		Municipalities, Government of Alberta
Geospatial data and visualization ?	??	?

\*Anticipated timing windows include: Short-Term (2023-24); Medium-Term (2025-2030), and Long-Term (2030-2040); 'Ongoing' refers to repetitive operational program activities.



**Over 17,000 km of riparian shoreline has been assessed for intactness in recent years in the North Saskatchewan and Battle River watersheds in Alberta.**

**IWMP Natural Heritage Goals**

**Instream flow needs of the NSR watershed are met**

**Aquatic ecosystem health in the NSR watershed is maintained or improved**

**(NSWA 2012)**



### 3.5 Water Quality Goals, Objectives, and Actions

#### GOAL: Maintain or improve water quality in kisiskâciwani-sîpiy.

KEY ACTIONS	Timing*	Lead
WaterSHED water quality monitoring program implementation and communications	Ongoing	EPCOR, with NSWA, AEPA
Implement the <a href="#">Surface Water Quality Framework</a> for the North Saskatchewan basin	Ongoing	Government of Alberta, AEPA
Integrate water quality outcomes in the Designated Industrial Zone (DIZ) pilot, Industrial Heartland	Ongoing?	Government of Alberta, Industry
Implement the Source Water Protection Plan for Edmonton (EPCOR, 2020)	Ongoing	EPCOR
Implement the Stormwater Integrated Resource Plan (SIRP), including \$1.6 billion of investment		EPCOR
Upgrade wastewater treatment systems at Goldbar to include advanced membrane technologies	Medium-term	EPCOR
Implement the Blackmud/Whitemud stormwater release rates in development planning (3.0 L/s/ha)	Ongoing	Blackmud/Whitemud Surface Water Management Group
Complete a water quality trend analysis for the Sturgeon River, and pursue targeted funding for projects	Medium-term	Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance
<b>Complete a <i>Stormwater Management Plan</i> for the Edmonton Metropolitan Region</b>	??	EMRB
Integrate water quality goals, targets, and triggers into land use plans, policies, and procedures, including municipal plans and the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan	Ongoing	Municipalities Government of Alberta

*Anticipated timing windows include: Short-Term (2023-24); Medium-Term (2025-2030), and Long-Term (2030-2040); 'Ongoing' refers to repetitive operational program activities.*

#### Water Quality: A Key Focus Area for Ongoing Management and Stewardship

Water quality in Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy continues to be a major focus for several levels of government and stakeholders. The federal *Wastewater Systems Effluent Regulation* under the *Fisheries Act* helps protect receiving environments and aquatic life from wastewater discharges. The Government of Alberta has developed Environmental Quality Guidelines for Alberta Surface Waters (GoA, 2018), and administers the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* and *Codes of Practice*. The PPWB also monitors water quality at the border with Saskatchewan using site-specific water quality objectives.

In 2022, a *Surface Water Quality Management Framework for the North Saskatchewan and Battle Rivers* came into effect, including site-specific water quality **objectives**, triggers and limits for 21 water quality parameters (GoA, 2022). This framework is consistent with and builds from the PPWB Master Agreement, Industrial Heartland Designated Industrial Zone (IH-DIZ) pilot, the Water Management Framework for the Industrial Heartland and Capital Region (Government of Alberta, 2016), as well as the NSWA IWMP goal to maintain or improve water quality (NSWA 2012).

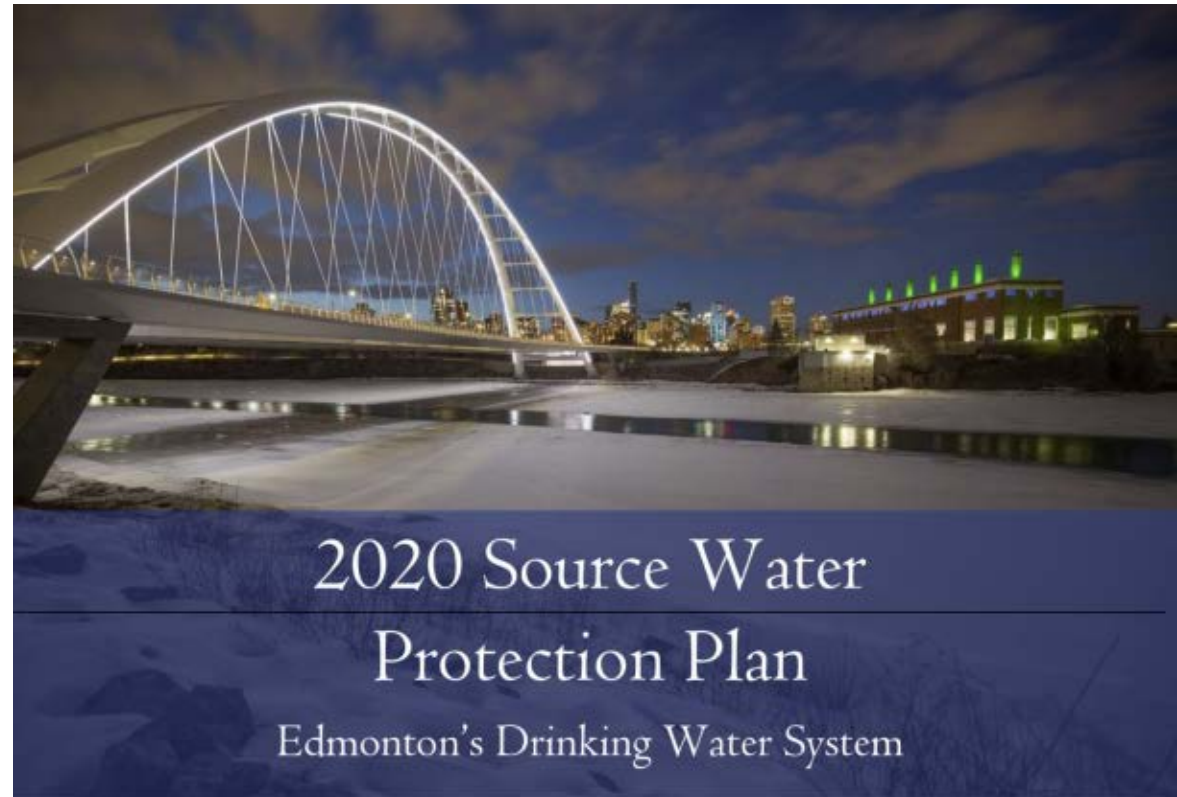
**What actions will YOU or your organization take to maintain or restore the water quality of kisiskâciwani-sîpiy?**

## EPCOR Utilities Inc. Commitments to Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy

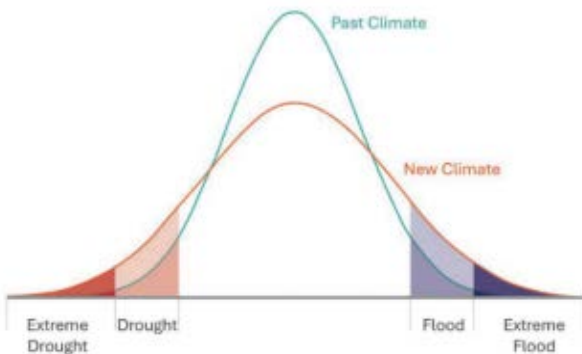
**Source Water Protection:** EPCOR's Source Water Protection Plan assesses risks and develops mitigation strategies and actions to protect source water. This is part of their multi-barrier approach to protecting public health and providing safe drinking water to their customers (EPCOR, 2020).

**Stormwater Management:** EPCOR Drainage plans to invest \$1.6 billion over the next 20 years through its' Stormwater Integrated Resource Plan (SIRP). Investments will include both grey and green (Low Impact Development) infrastructure to reduce local flood risk and improve water quality (EPCOR, 2020). The commitment include almost \$500 million earmarked for Low Impact Development facilities (Ancel, 2021). This is very likely to improve water quality within and downstream from Edmonton, by filtering many of the pollutants found in urban stormwater runoff as well as reducing erosion risks within watersheds.

**Wastewater Management:** The Goldbar Wastewater Treatment Plant is one of Canada's largest, most complex, and most innovative sewage treatment plants. Each year, it treats over 200,000 million tons of sewage, and remains at the forefront of investing in new wastewater treatment technologies, including planned upgrades to advanced membrane treatment in 2027.



### 3.6 Cross-Cutting Theme: Climate Change



**Figure 15.** Flood and drought risks in a changing climate Adapted from: Gleick (2022)

Climate change is a ‘wild card’ influencing the heritage integrity of kisiskâciwani-sîpiy in several ways. This includes changes and risks to water flows and seasonal timing, water quality, species and habitats, historic and archaeological sites, and recreation and tourism values.

Local temperatures will increase more than global averages in kisiskâciwani-sîpiy’s northern climate. Recent projections for Edmonton show average annual temperature increases of +3.5°C to +5.6°C by the 2050s, to as high as +8°C by the 2080s (COE, 2018). Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy is responding to these changes in many ways. Higher temperatures, more intense rainfall, melting glaciers, and earlier spring melts are increasing the risk of both flood and drought (Kerr, et al., 2019). Some studies

indicate the annual likelihood of floods may double due to climate change (COE, 2018).

Risks to water quality from climate change include increased urban and agricultural runoff, pollution spikes after forest fires, heat-related algae and bacteria growth, less dilution of pollution during low flows, and low dissolved oxygen causing fish kills (Kerr, et al., 2019).

Many initiatives are underway in the region advancing climate action. A few key highlights are listed below.

KEY ACTIONS	Timing*	Lead
Execute plans for over 25 projects to build an emerging hydrogen economy in the Industrial Heartland	Ongoing	Edmonton Region Hydrogen HUB, Industries
Implement the Community Energy Transition Strategy, Change for Climate & Climate Resilient Edmonton programs	Mid to long-term	City of Edmonton
Invest \$3 billion to deliver +2 GW of renewable energy capacity, building on the phase-out of coal achieved in 2021	Mid term	TransAlta Utilities
Continue to advance plans for high-speed rail (Prairie Link) and/or hyperloop (TransPod) from Edmonton to Calgary	Mid term	Prairie Link; TransPod

Anticipated timing windows: Short-Term (2023-24); Medium-Term (2025-2030), and Long-Term (2030-2040)



*What actions will YOU or your organization take to increase climate resilience related to kisiskâciwani-sîpiy?*



### 3.10 Summary of the Heritage Strategy

The Heritage Strategy in this Heritage River Designation Concept is centered around an action-oriented strategy, which coherently links a vision, principles, goals, and actions. The intent is for this strategic, integrated blueprint to function for years to come, fostering greater recognition, stewardship, and promotion of the heritage of this timeless river.

Develop 1-page Integrated Graphic with:

***VISION:*** *Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy's diverse heritage values are recognized and stewarded, strengthening thriving communities connected by the river's landscapes and history.*

***PRINCIPLES:***

- |              |                 |                          |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| -Recognition | -Respect        | -Reconciliation          |
| -Integrity   | -Sustainability | -Voluntary Participation |
| -Leadership  | -Collaboration  | -Partnerships            |

***CULTURE GOAL:*** *Recognize and steward the diverse cultural heritage associated with kisiskâciwani-sîpiy*

***RECREATION GOAL:*** *Promote kisiskâciwani-sîpiy as a diverse recreational amenity and destination, compatible with the natural and cultural heritage values of the river*

***NATURAL HERITAGE GOAL:*** *Maintain or improve the natural heritage of kisiskâciwani-sîpiy, including its watershed, greenways, flora, and fauna.*

***WATER QUALITY GOAL:*** *Maintain or improve water quality in kisiskâciwani-sîpiy.*



**Figure 16.** Fort George and Buckingham House provincial historic site museum, near Elk Point  
[Fort George and Buckingham House Provincial Historic site \(travelalberta.com\)](http://travelalberta.com)

## 4 Implementation and Monitoring

### 4.1 Stewardship and Collaboration

Implementation of the *Heritage Designation Concept* will require collective accountability for cooperation, collaboration, and stewardship from many Indigenous communities, individuals, organization, and governments with a variety of worldviews, perspectives, areas of expertise, and authorities. The Canadian Heritage River designation is non-binding and honorific in nature, which means that it is primarily a means to “brand” the existing natural, cultural, heritage, and recreational stewardship work that is already occurring along the river. This branding is seen as a means to enhance and support existing and potential future stewardship activities so they may collectively be more effective in celebrating kisiskâciwani-sîpiy.

The vision for implementing the Heritage Designation Concept is one where individuals, communities, and organizations may continue to act individually to advance watershed stewardship AND have the opportunity to voluntarily collaborate on future stewardship actions. The vision requires that a foundation, or “roots”, are developed and maintained to sustain the co-created outcomes, or “growth”, they aim to achieve. While the branches and canopy are not yet defined, they will be identified and co-created with the Indigenous communities, individuals, organization, and governments who participate. The foundation includes:

1. Relationship building among and between people and organizations with differing worldviews and areas of expertise so that other ‘roots’ are able to grow.
2. Sharing and learning among the many differing perspectives so there is a basis for understanding across perspectives.
3. Co-create stewardship model that serves the specific needs of advancing stewardship through the Canadian Heritage River designation banner.
4. Co-create initiatives that can bring together worldviews and perspectives in on-the-ground stewardship actions.



Figure 17. Source: NSWA (2023)

## Indigenous Involvement with River Heritage

Indigenous peoples, ceremonies, and protocols are critical for this River, and any river stewardship initiative is not fully complete without Indigenous input and participation. The work done to engage Indigenous peoples for this *Heritage Designation Concept* shows Indigenous communities clearly want to be involved with kisiskâciwani-sîpiy / omaka-ty, and want these types of conversations to continue and deepen. Importantly, Indigenous peoples expressed a view of the heritage designation as a stepping stone towards more meaningful actions, leading to clear, tangible results such as visible improvements to river conditions and health. The authors of this report have taken care to reflect what was heard, but acknowledge this is just an initial starting point and a moral compass. This *Heritage Designation Concept* is a living and breathing stewardship model and, just like the river, it will change over time in response to continued sharing and learning from Indigenous communities and other partners.

Over time, Indigenous people may increasingly take leading roles in co-creating and implementing components of this Heritage River Concept, which serves not only the purpose of implementation, but also potentially decolonizing governance processes and advancing reconciliation.

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***“Once we understand each other a bit more clearly, we can tell the rest of the people, this is what’s happening to our water and how to take care of it – because it’s taken care of us up till now”***

*-Violet Poitras, Nakota/Cree Elder, Paul First Nation  
Source: Alberta Water Council [Guide to Source Water Protection Planning 2020](#)*

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***“The heritage river designation should walk hand-in-hand with protection, like two canoes travelling together down the River, this journey should be taken side by side”***

*-Indigenous engagement participant*

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## Non-Profit Organizations and River Heritage Stewardship

Many diverse non-profit organizations are working towards similar goals that overlap with river heritage stewardship and promotion, including but not limited to:

- The NSWA, as well as the closely related more local watershed groups including the Headwaters Alliance, Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance, and Vermilion River Watershed Alliance. These include collaborations of 33 municipalities, 11 non-governmental groups, and 5 government agencies.
- The Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition, who strive to “ensure preservation of the natural character and environment of the North Saskatchewan River Valley and its Ravine System” (ERVCC, 2023).
- The RiverWatch Institute of Alberta is the largest not-for-profit river rafting group that leads citizen science, river-based school field





## Regulatory Agencies and River Heritage Governance

The river heritage of kisiskâciwani-sîpiy will continue to be influenced and guided by the existing and future policies, legislation, regulations, and regulatory approval processes set by federal, provincial, and municipal governments and regulatory agencies. These are highlighted further in Section 1.7.1 “Policy Context” and will not be reiterated here.

Government entities, individuals, organizations, and the CHRB should rest assured that:

- i. **existing regulatory systems will not be affected by a Heritage Rivers designation**, and these systems help to manage the river’s natural, heritage, and recreational values, and
- ii. **there shall be no duplication or additional regulations or approvals created** as a result of heritage river designation.

The Government of Alberta strives to be a leader in both water resources management and heritage management, and have a range of regulatory tools, processes, and monitoring networks at their disposal which continue to evolve. In particular, Alberta’s Surface Water Quality Framework for the North Saskatchewan River basin (2022) fits in an overall framework to manage cumulative effects of activities on surface water quality. This includes a system of indicators, triggers, and thresholds linked to monitoring and modelling. Crossing triggers or limits requires a response from the government, with specific management or regulatory actions taken as necessary.

In addition, the potential for a North Saskatchewan Regional Plan under the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* could provide important opportunities to align environmental objectives, cumulative effects, and development processes with watershed stewardship and river heritage management, in ways that will ultimately be more consistent, coordinated, and clear.



**Figure 18.** North Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council (2014): Source: [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://landuse.alberta.ca/LandUse%20Documents/NS%20RAC%20Recommendations%20Report\\_Final.pdf](https://landuse.alberta.ca/LandUse%20Documents/NS%20RAC%20Recommendations%20Report_Final.pdf)



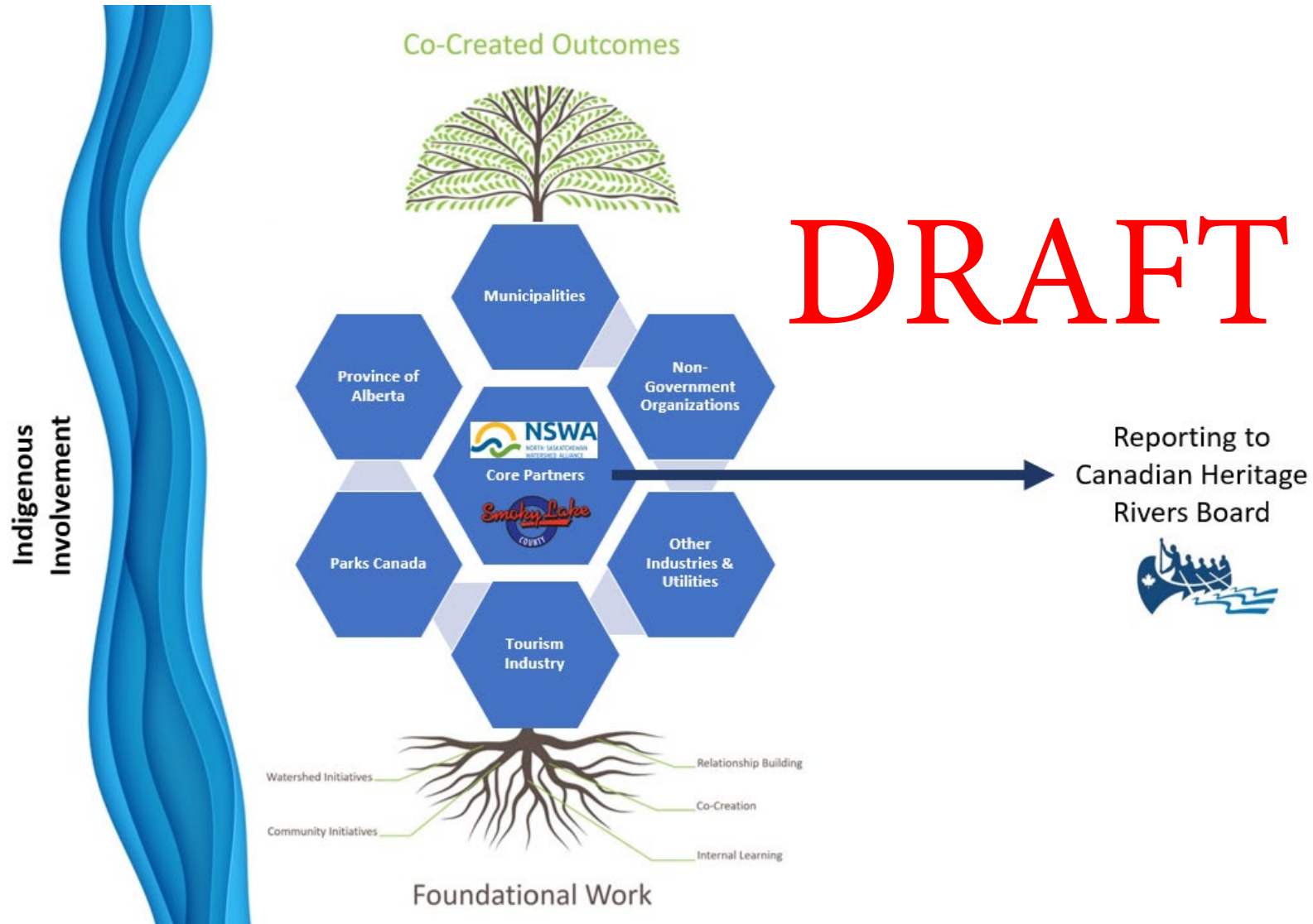


Figure 19. DRAFT Governance and Reporting Framework

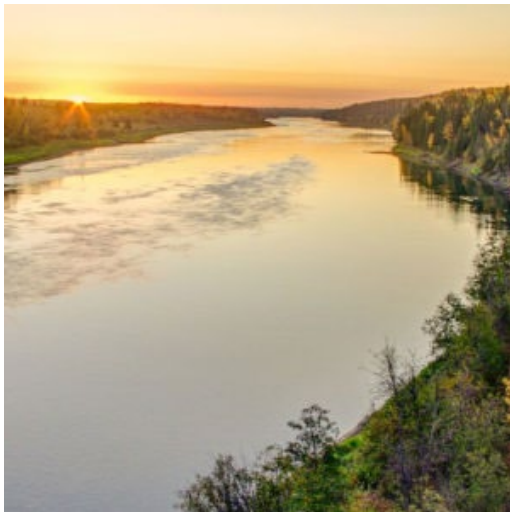
## 4.2 Communicating the Benefits of Designation

Designation will help protect and improve the North Saskatchewan’s cultural, recreational, and natural heritage values for the enjoyment and benefit of current and future generations, and provide a link to the rich history and stories contained and associated with these waters.

The designation of kisiskâciwani-sîpiy as a Canadian Heritage River will be influential in capturing the public’s imagination, drawing them in to learn more about all components of river heritage. Benefits arising from heritage river designation are likely to include more high quality recreation opportunities and related health and spiritual benefits, tourism development and related economic opportunities<sup>2</sup>, and a greater appreciation of the river, its values, and history.

Processes to steward and govern the river also bring citizens and communities together, spark conversations and improve relations. It also may help stimulate or encourage additional community-based or individual actions that add to the protection, care and love for this remarkable waterway. Increasing awareness has been noted as a way to attract more people along the river to take action and contribute towards the realization of benefits (FBC, 2021).

This also helps with reconciliation between Canada’s diverse peoples, as acknowledging river heritage and repairing our relationship with the river is seen by many as critical to repairing relationships between ourselves, as part of the process of reconciliation. We hope and expect that many of these types of benefits will deepen and accumulate over time.



**Figure 20.** *North Saskatchewan River at Highway 831 (Steve Ricketts)*

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<sup>2</sup> More specific analyses of recreation and tourism opportunities and constraints can be found in [Appendix X](#)

### 4.3 Framework/Sequence for Implementation

The framework and sequence for implementation includes a listing of short-term (2023-2024), medium-term (2025-2030), and long-term (2030-2040) actions under each thematic goal for achieving the vision. However, these are not a complete inventory. It is also acknowledged that the occurrence and timing of implementation initiatives may vary according to various organizational priorities, resources, and capacities.

The NSWA and its core partners/steering committee will lead and produce annual reports on events, actions, and activities that have been taken to support river heritage values. Many agencies will help to support and contribute information to these reports, including the Province of Alberta, Parks Canada, City of Edmonton, EPCOR, Indigenous communities, and other agencies.

More extensive monitoring reports will be prepared every 10 years, describing the status of river heritage values and integrity, and progress towards the vision, goals, and actions identified in this Concept. As needed and as grant or other funding allows, consulting support may be procured and administered by the NSWA – or as agreed upon, by other partner agencies, to complete the comprehensive 10-year monitoring report to the desired level of effort and standard of quality. Activities and tasks to be delegated to any consultant(s) procured might include, but not be limited to: reporting and documentation, data analysis and synthesis, communications and engagement supports, mapping and cartography, graphic design, etc.

Based on the framework and sequence for implementation outlined above, the continued designation of Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy as a Canadian Heritage River will be possible for future generations.

## 4.4 Statements of Commitment to Implement

WILL NEED CAREFUL FUTURE ATTENTION PAID TOWARDS WHAT GOES HERE vs. APPENDIX B. vs Foreword

GOA

NSWA

First Nations and Métis

Smoky Lake County

EPCOR

City of Edmonton

Edmonton Metropolitan Region?

Cows and Fish?

Colleges/Universities?

Other?

## 4.5 Monitoring, Review and Reporting

Monitoring, review, and reporting will occur, as outlined above and led by the NSWA, to file the required annual and decadal reports with the Canada Heritage Rivers Board, including:

- Annual reports describing changes, improvements, and threats to the values for which the river was designated, including river-based events and stewardship actions.
- Every ten years, an in-depth review of the river's values will be undertaken and a monitoring report on the decade is prepared and tabled with the Board.

Like the river, actions to protect, enhance and improve its natural, cultural and heritage conditions are dynamic and emerging continually – annual reports are critical platforms by which to track significant developments.

### National Monitoring, Review, and Reporting

Environment and Climate Change Canada collects water quality data at two National Long-term Water Quality Monitoring Data stations on the North Saskatchewan River (Canada, n.d.)<sup>3</sup>. One station is located near the BC-Alberta border called Whirlpool Point and the other is located near the Saskatchewan border at Highway 17. Approximately 20 years of monthly data have been collected and used to inform the Lake Winnipeg Basin Initiative and support activities of the Prairie Provinces Water Board. The available data typically includes results on major ions, nutrients, metals, and physical parameters.

The national hydrometric program is a partnership between the federal and provincial governments with seven Water Survey of Canada stations that provide information for the collection, interpretation, and dissemination of surface water quantity data to help inform both water management and environmental needs (Canada, n.d.).

### Provincial Monitoring, Review, and Reporting

The Government of Alberta and its partners collect water quality data at five stations along the North Saskatchewan River as part of the Long Term River Network (Government of Alberta, n.d.). There are also 13 locations in tributaries of the North Saskatchewan River which are part of the Tributary Monitoring Network. Scientists, the public, and decision makers can use this publicly available data to understand if Alberta's water is safe for recreational, domestic and traditional uses and to determine if it can support the health of plants and animals in the ecosystem. The Government of Alberta is also a partner in the hydrometric monitoring program and they report on flood forecasting, high water alerts, water shortage advisories, and ice advisories (Government of Alberta, n.d.).

### Local Monitoring, Review, and Reporting

A significant amount of monitoring and reporting on the North Saskatchewan River is conducted by the Government of Alberta, the City of Edmonton, academic scientists and consultants. In 2014, a large synoptic report included a report review, data compilation, data analysis, a status assessment, and synthesis and

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<sup>3</sup> Government of Canada. National Long-term Water Quality Monitoring Data. <https://search.open.canada.ca/openmap/67b44816-9764-4609-ace1-68dc1764e9ea>

evaluation of work done from 2007 to 2012 on the North Saskatchewan River (Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, 2014). Overall, the state of the North Saskatchewan River downstream of the Industrial Heartland reach was assessed as fair to good and there were clear long-term improvements in terms of nutrients and biological responses. The report identified priority issues that may require ongoing monitoring, assessment, and management activities. The priority issues included focusing on emerging contaminants and non-point source loadings. The latter includes stormwater which has been monitored comprehensively by EPCOR on behalf of the City of Edmonton for many years.

WaterSHED (Water: Saskatchewan Headwaters Edmonton and Downstream) is a monitoring program specific to the North Saskatchewan River Basin that helps to develop our understanding of watershed processes and changes in water quality, quantity, and ecosystem functioning (Government of Alberta, n.d.). A total of 18 tributaries were selected to represent the watershed structures within the NSR along with two stations on the main stem of the NSR. Each station monitors river flow continuously, and several water quality parameters (continuous monitoring of some physical parameters and some discrete sampling for additional parameters). The WaterSHED program also helps determine the adequacy and effectiveness of the existing and new watershed management objectives and can affect the role of modeling for future management decisions. The monitoring program is a collaboration between Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (AEPA), EPCOR, the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) and the City of Edmonton.

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## 5 Conclusion

**Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy; Omaka-ty; the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta. This river goes by many names, but all agree that it is one of the best available additions to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System. Implementation of this Heritage Designation Concept can help to realize the vision that *“Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy’s diverse heritage values are recognized and stewarded, strengthening place-based thriving communities connected by the river’s landscapes and history.”***

Many organizations, jurisdictions, industries, Indigenous Nations, and citizens along the river and within its watershed will contribute towards the implementation and governance of heritage values. The lead reporting agency liaison with the CHRB in the future will be the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA). The NSWA and its many partners are confident and hopeful that progressive implementation and stewardship will help minimize risks to river heritage integrity, to achieve a wide range of benefits that contribute to greater ecological, economic, and societal resilience.

Designation will promote continued awareness and initiatives on the part of the public and all levels of government, to further protect, enhance, and interpret the river’s cultural heritage, natural heritage, and recreational values for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. ***In essence, the River provides a platform to connect to the past and enrich the present.***

The hope is that this strategic, integrated blueprint for action will foster greater recognition, stewardship, and promotion of the heritage of this timeless river, and continue to function for years to come, generating benefits for current and future generations.

**Heritage river designation is commemorative and symbolic. This Heritage Concept recognizes and reaffirms policies for river management and stewardship that influence the heritage integrity of Kisiskâciwani-sîpiy, and does not supplant or replace any official policy context or processes.**

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## 7 List of Acronyms

ACA - Alberta Capital Airshed

ACP - Alberta Community Partnership

AEPA - Alberta Environment and Protected Areas

AIHA - Alberta Industrial Heartland Association

CABIN - Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Network

CAO - Chief Administrative Officer

CCME - Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment

CHRB - Canadian Heritage Rivers Board

CHRS - Canadian Heritage Rivers System

COE - City of Edmonton

DFO - Department of Fisheries and Oceans

DIZ - Designated Industrial Zone

EMRB - Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board

ERVCC - Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition

FAP - Fort Air Partnership

FRI - Foothills Research Institute

GOA - Government of Alberta

HPPP - Heritage Preservation Partnership Program

IWMP - Integrated Watershed Management Plan

LAA - Legislative Assembly of Alberta

LUF - Land Use Framework

NSR - North Saskatchewan River in Alberta

NSRP - North Saskatchewan Regional Plan

NSWA - North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance

PPOG - Principles, Procedures, and Operational Guidelines (CHRB)

PPWB - Prairie Provinces Water Board

PSRB - Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin

RVA - River Valley Alliance

SIRP - Stormwater Integrated Resource Plan

THREATS - The Healthy Rivers Ecosystem Assessment System

WCAS - West Central Airshed Society

WPAC - Watershed Planning and Advisory Council

WSG - Watershed Stewardship Group

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## 8 Appendices

**Appendix A: Map Package: Heritage River Concept Area & Reaches**

**Appendix B: Selected Statements/Letters of Support**

**Appendix C: Indigenous Engagement Report & Record - 2023**

**Appendix D: Public/Stakeholder Engagement What We Heard report - 2023**

**Appendix E: Heritage River Tourism Planning Report - 2023**

**Appendix F: North Saskatchewan River Heritage Research Report - 2022**

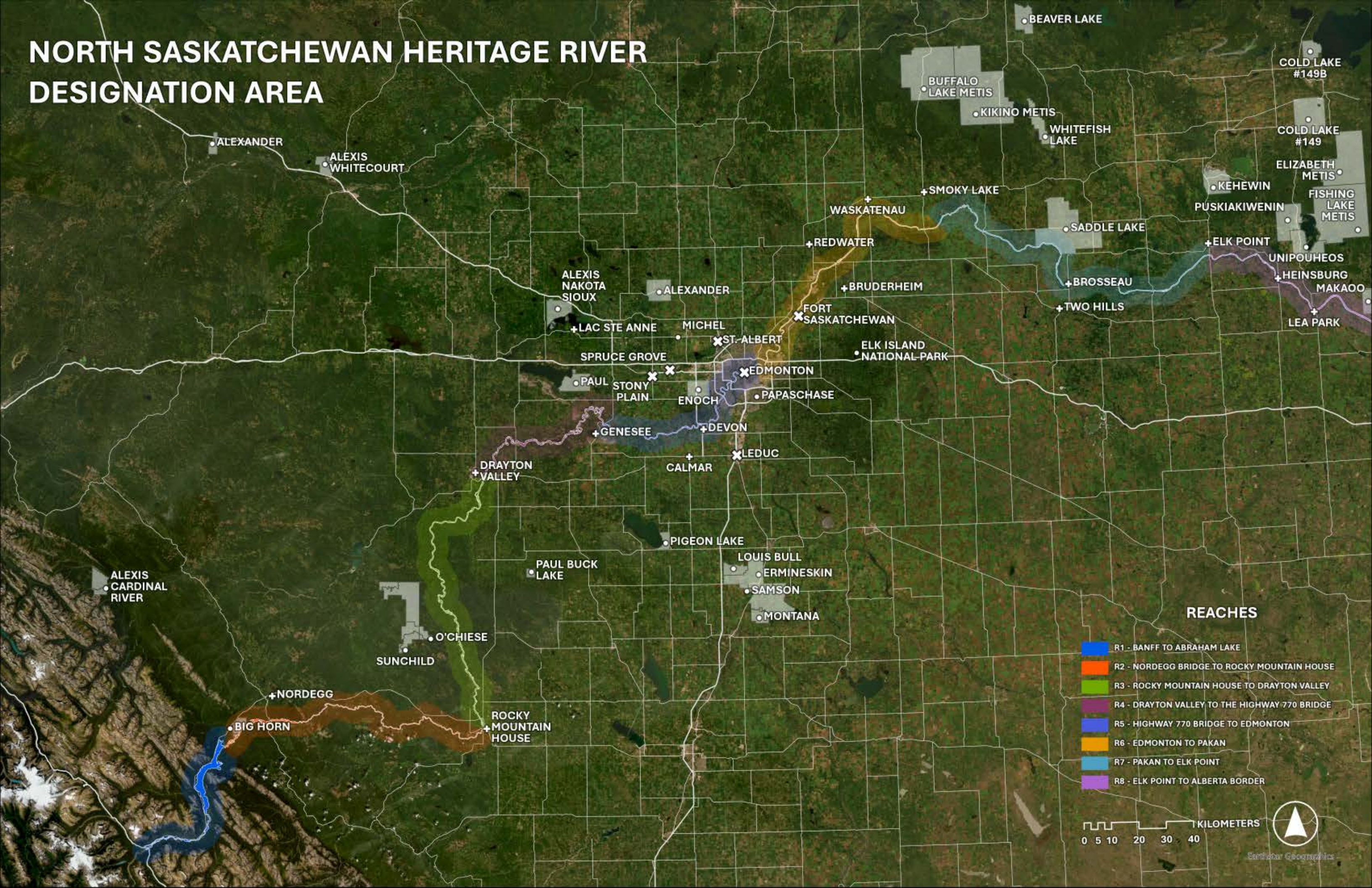
**Appendix G: Chronology of Recent Events - 2022**



Placeholder – Rossdale, June 2022  
*Source: Smoky Lake County*

## **Appendix A: Map Package: Heritage River Concept Area & Reaches**

# NORTH SASKATCHEWAN HERITAGE RIVER DESIGNATION AREA



- ### REACHES
- R1 - BANFF TO ABRAHAM LAKE
  - R2 - NORDEGG BRIDGE TO ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE
  - R3 - ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE TO DRAYTON VALLEY
  - R4 - DRAYTON VALLEY TO THE HIGHWAY 770 BRIDGE
  - R5 - HIGHWAY 770 BRIDGE TO EDMONTON
  - R6 - EDMONTON TO PAKAN
  - R7 - PAKAN TO ELK POINT
  - R8 - ELK POINT TO ALBERTA BORDER



# R1 - BANFF TO ABRAHAM LAKE

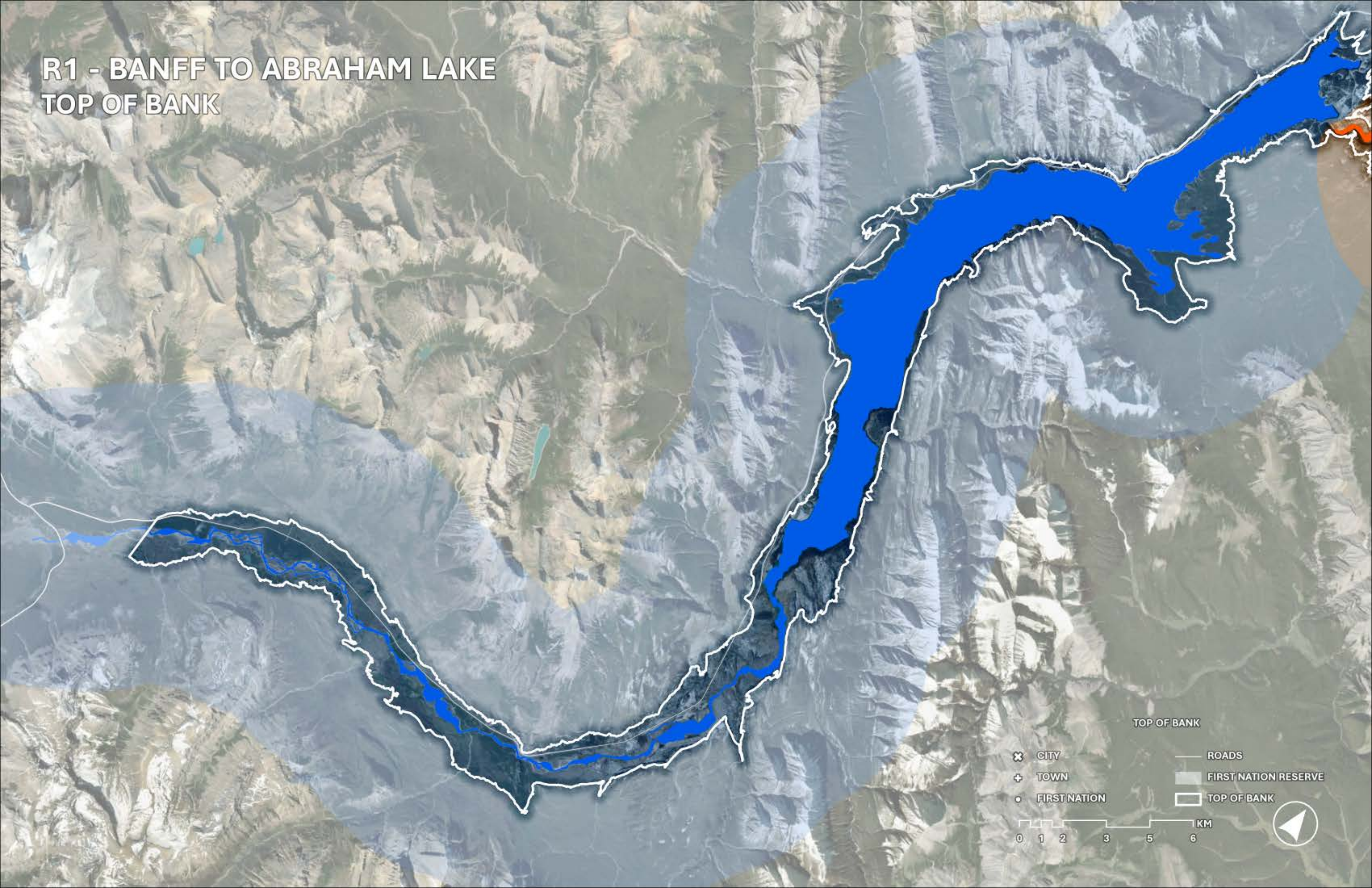


0 0.75 1.5 3 4.5 6 KILOMETERS





# R1 - BANFF TO ABRAHAM LAKE TOP OF BANK



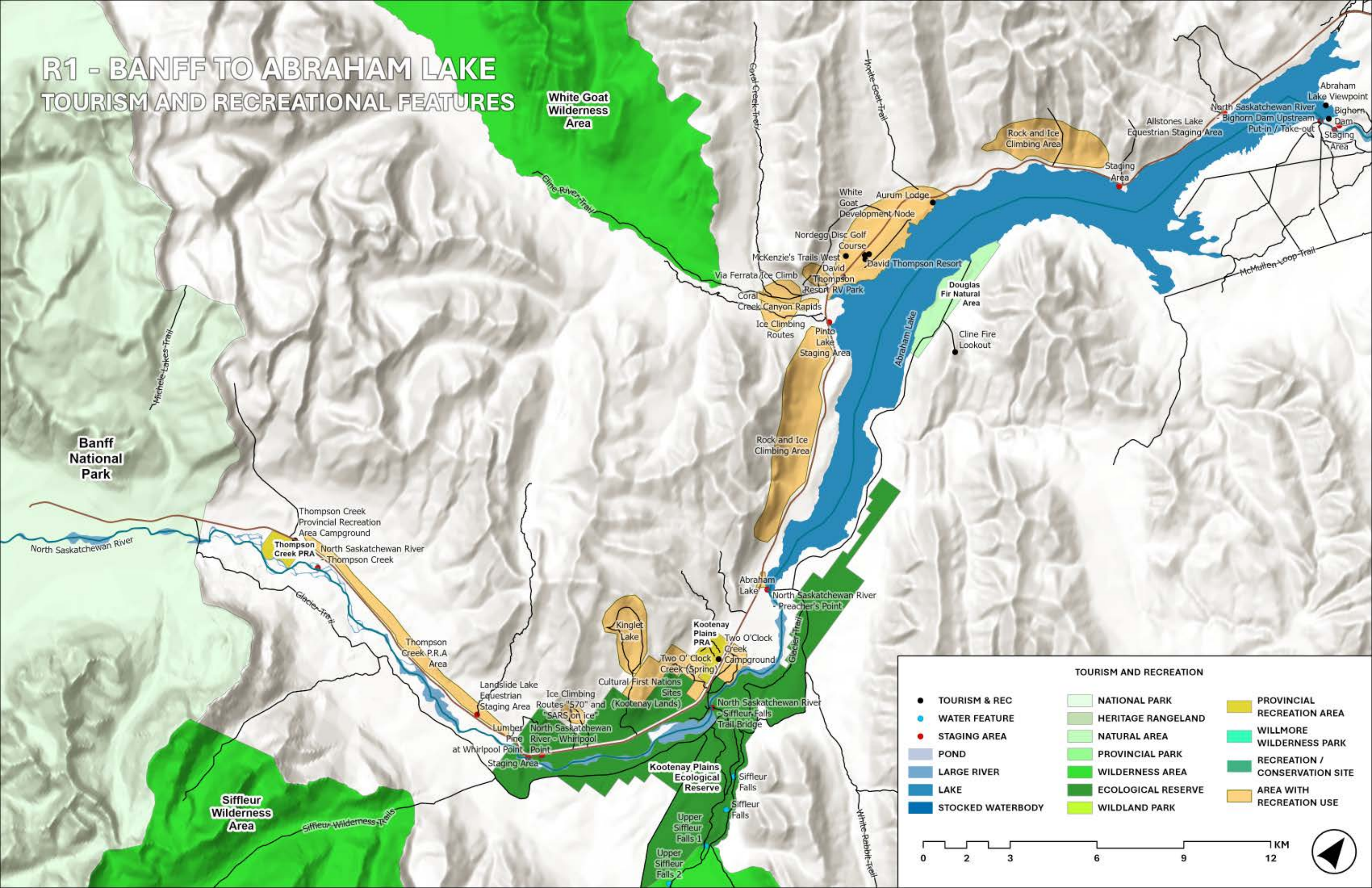
TOP OF BANK

✕ CITY	— ROADS
+ TOWN	■ FIRST NATION RESERVE
• FIRST NATION	□ TOP OF BANK

0 1 2 3 5 6 KM



# R1 - BANFF TO ABRAHAM LAKE TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL FEATURES



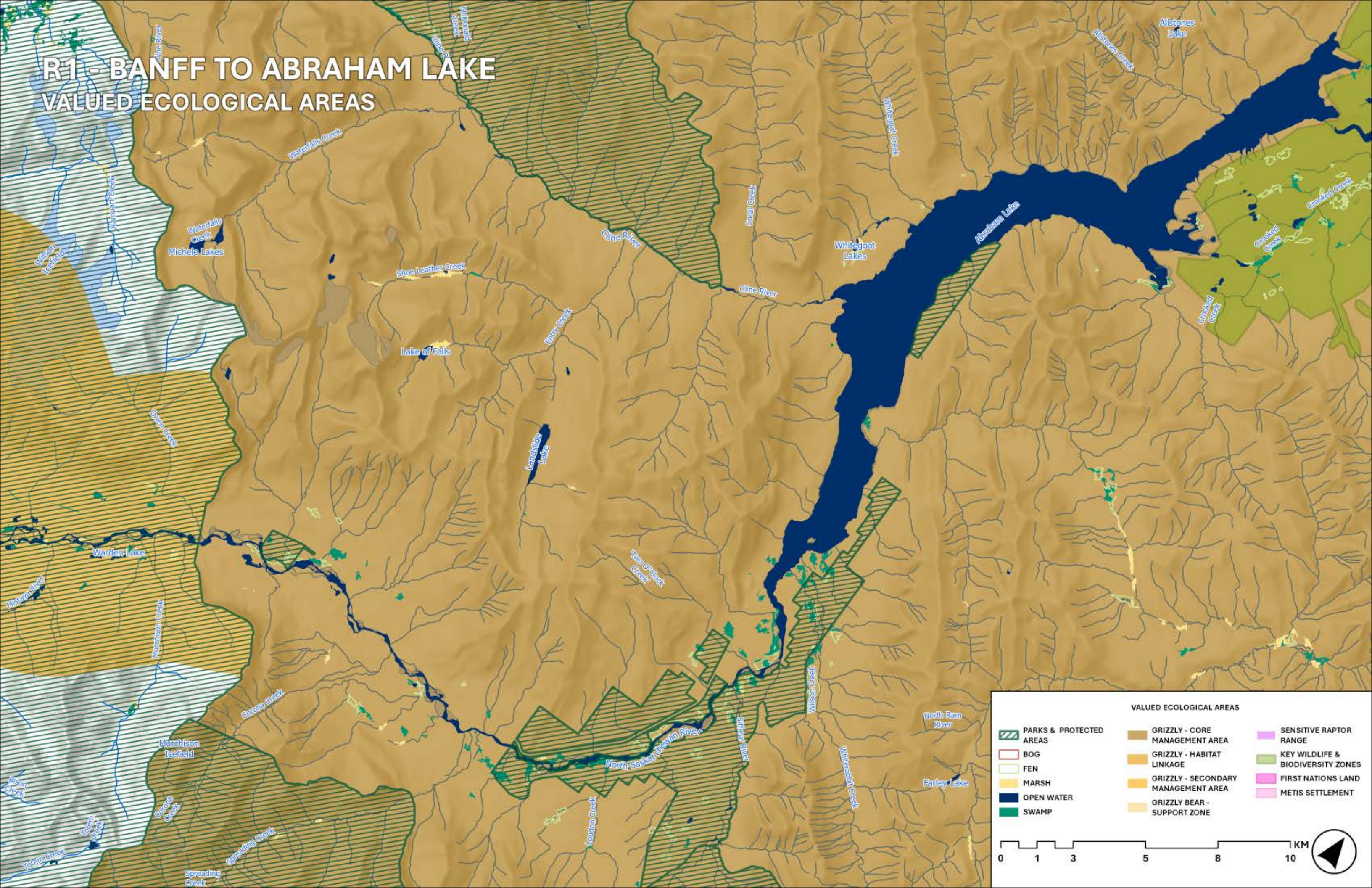
**TOURISM AND RECREATION**

● TOURISM & REC	□ NATIONAL PARK	■ PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREA
● WATER FEATURE	□ HERITAGE RANGELAND	■ WILLMORE WILDERNESS PARK
● STAGING AREA	□ NATURAL AREA	■ RECREATION / CONSERVATION SITE
■ POND	□ PROVINCIAL PARK	■ AREA WITH RECREATION USE
■ LARGE RIVER	■ WILDERNESS AREA	
■ LAKE	■ ECOLOGICAL RESERVE	
■ STOCKED WATERBODY	■ WILDLAND PARK	

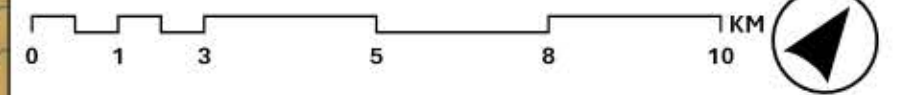
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# R1 - BANFF TO ABRAHAM LAKE

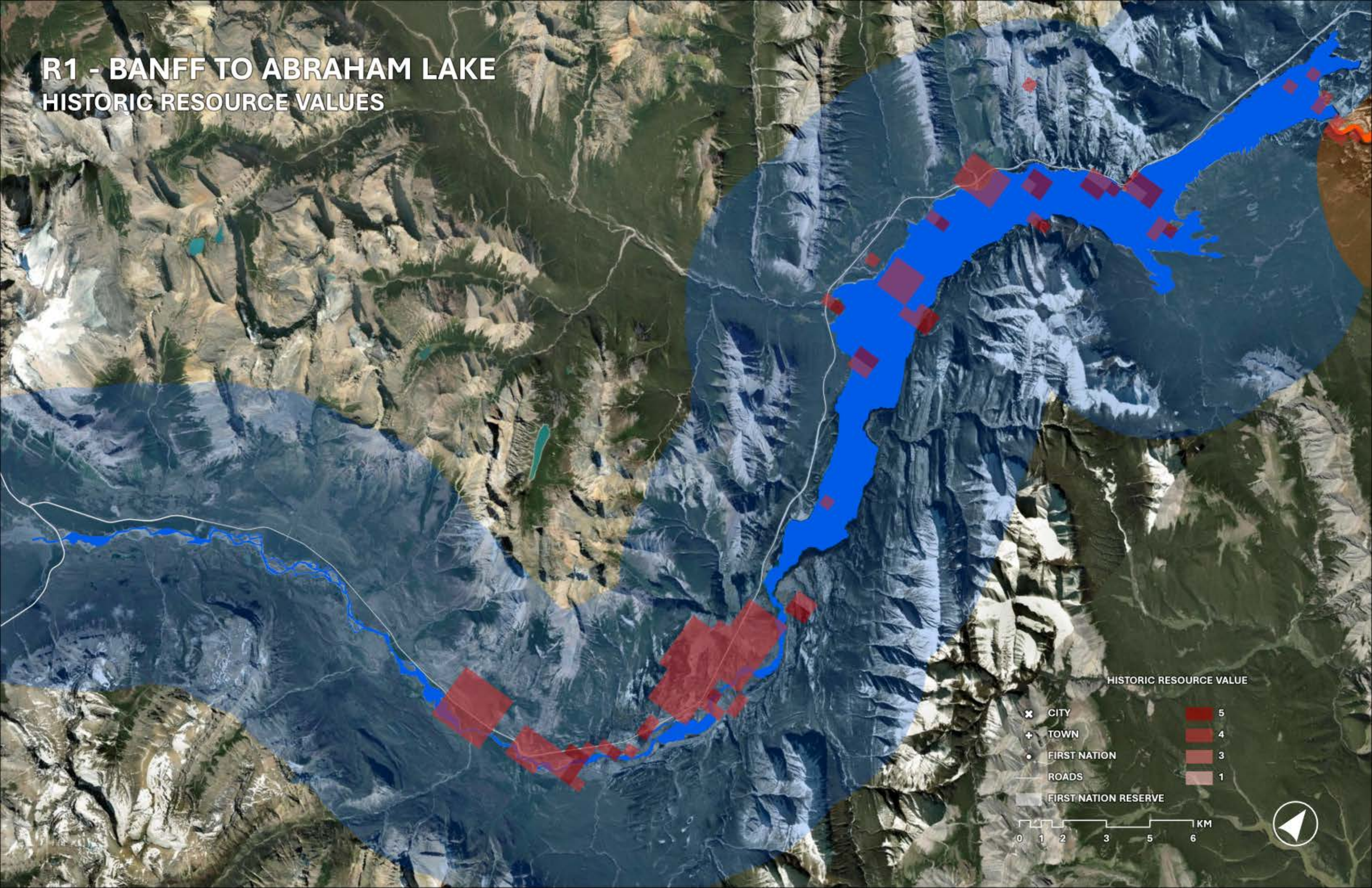
## VALUED ECOLOGICAL AREAS



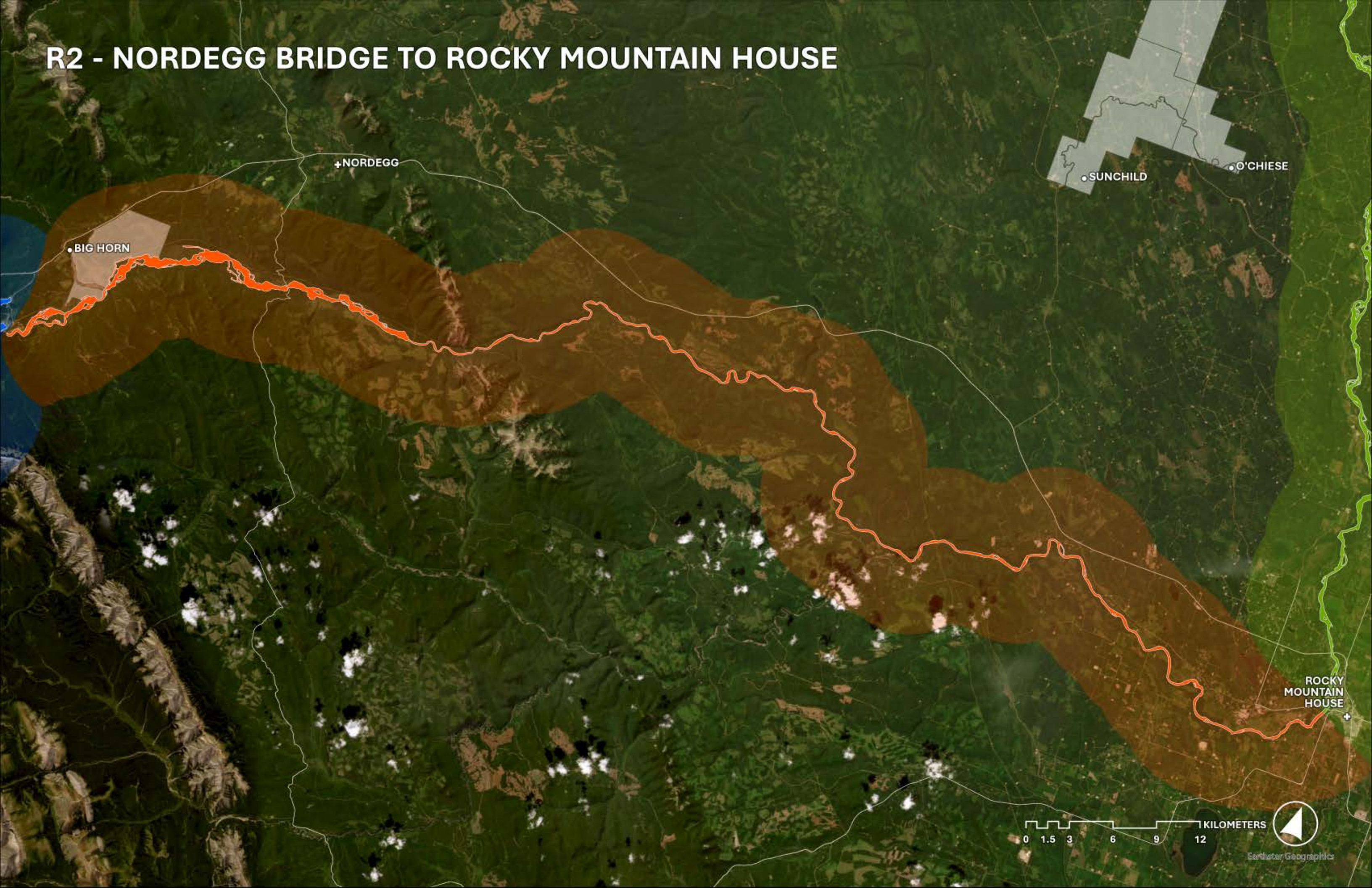
VALUED ECOLOGICAL AREAS					
	PARKS & PROTECTED AREAS		GRIZZLY - CORE MANAGEMENT AREA		SENSITIVE RAPTOR RANGE
	BOG		GRIZZLY - HABITAT LINKAGE		KEY WILDLIFE & BIODIVERSITY ZONES
	FEN		GRIZZLY - SECONDARY MANAGEMENT AREA		FIRST NATIONS LAND
	MARSH		GRIZZLY BEAR - SUPPORT ZONE		METIS SETTLEMENT
	OPEN WATER				
	SWAMP				



# R1 - BANFF TO ABRAHAM LAKE HISTORIC RESOURCE VALUES



# R2 - NORDEGG BRIDGE TO ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE



• BIG HORN

+ NORDEGG

• SUNCHILD

• O'CHIESE

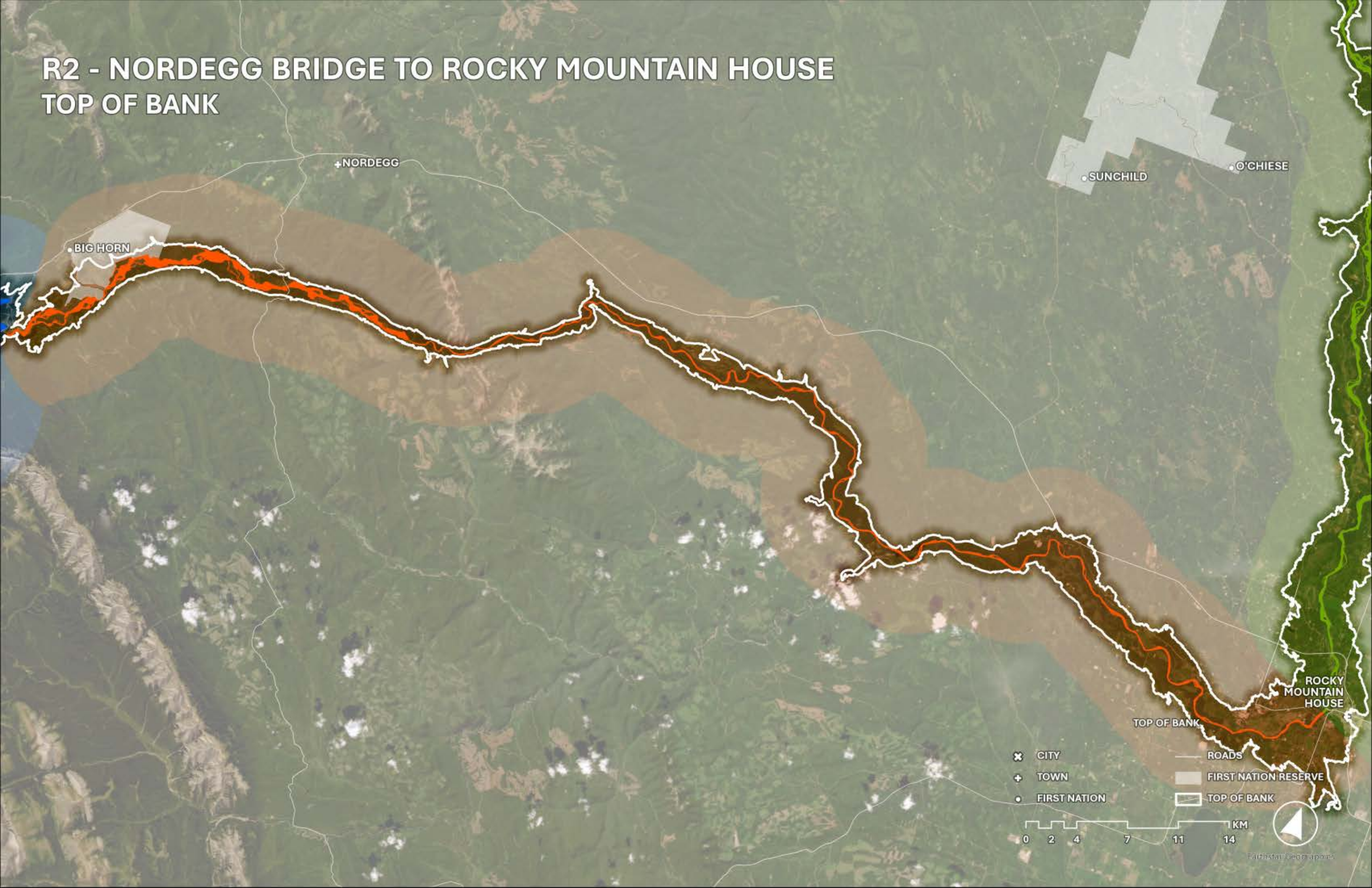
ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

0 1.5 3 6 9 12 KILOMETERS



Earthstar Geographics

# R2 - NORDEGG BRIDGE TO ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE TOP OF BANK



NORDEGG

BIG HORN

SUNCHILD

O'CHIESE

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

TOP OF BANK

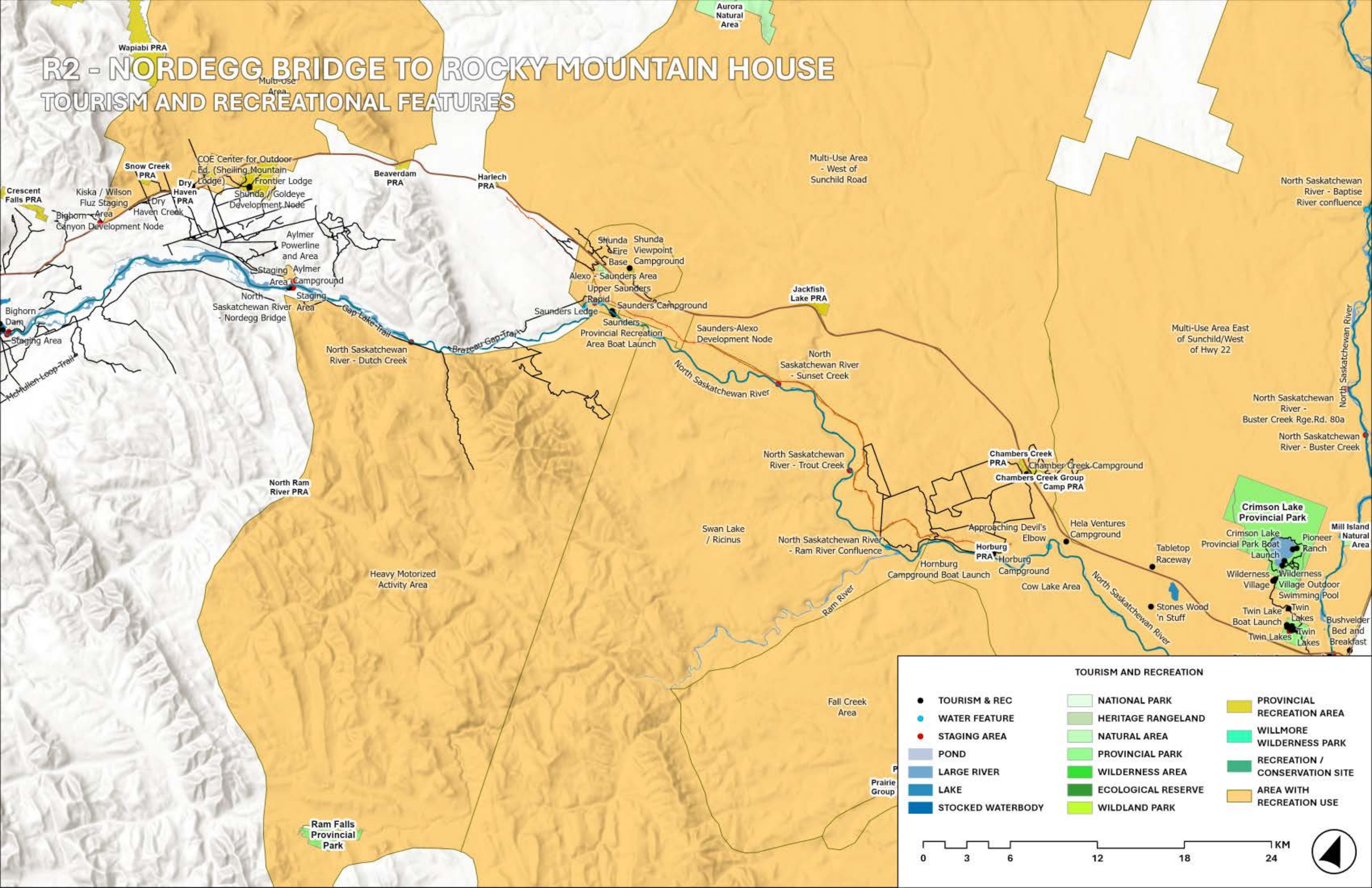
- ✕ CITY
- + TOWN
- FIRST NATION
- ROADS
- FIRST NATION RESERVE
- TOP OF BANK

0 2 4 7 11 14 KM



# R2 - NORDEGG BRIDGE TO ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

## TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL FEATURES



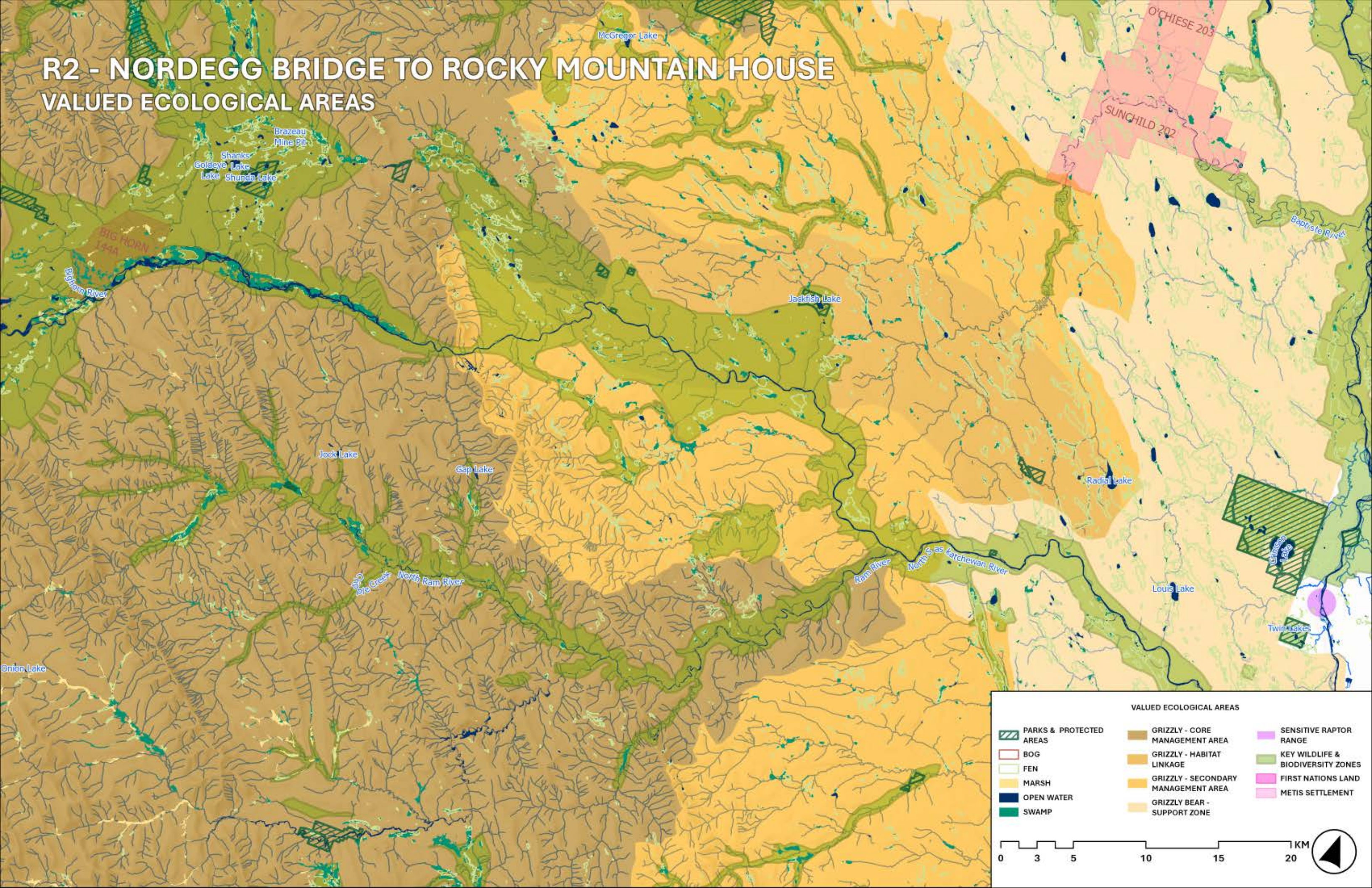
**TOURISM AND RECREATION**

● TOURISM & REC	□ NATIONAL PARK	■ PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREA
● WATER FEATURE	□ HERITAGE RANGELAND	■ WILLMORE WILDERNESS PARK
● STAGING AREA	□ NATURAL AREA	■ RECREATION / CONSERVATION SITE
■ POND	□ PROVINCIAL PARK	■ AREA WITH RECREATION USE
■ LARGE RIVER	■ WILDERNESS AREA	
■ LAKE	■ ECOLOGICAL RESERVE	
■ STOCKED WATERBODY	■ WILDLAND PARK	

0 3 6 12 18 24 KM

# R2 - NORDEGG BRIDGE TO ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

## VALUED ECOLOGICAL AREAS



VALUED ECOLOGICAL AREAS			
	PARKS & PROTECTED AREAS		SENSITIVE RAPTOR RANGE
	BOG		KEY WILDLIFE & BIODIVERSITY ZONES
	FEN		FIRST NATIONS LAND
	MARSH		METIS SETTLEMENT
	OPEN WATER		
	SWAMP		
	GRIZZLY - CORE MANAGEMENT AREA		
	GRIZZLY - HABITAT LINKAGE		
	GRIZZLY - SECONDARY MANAGEMENT AREA		
	GRIZZLY BEAR - SUPPORT ZONE		

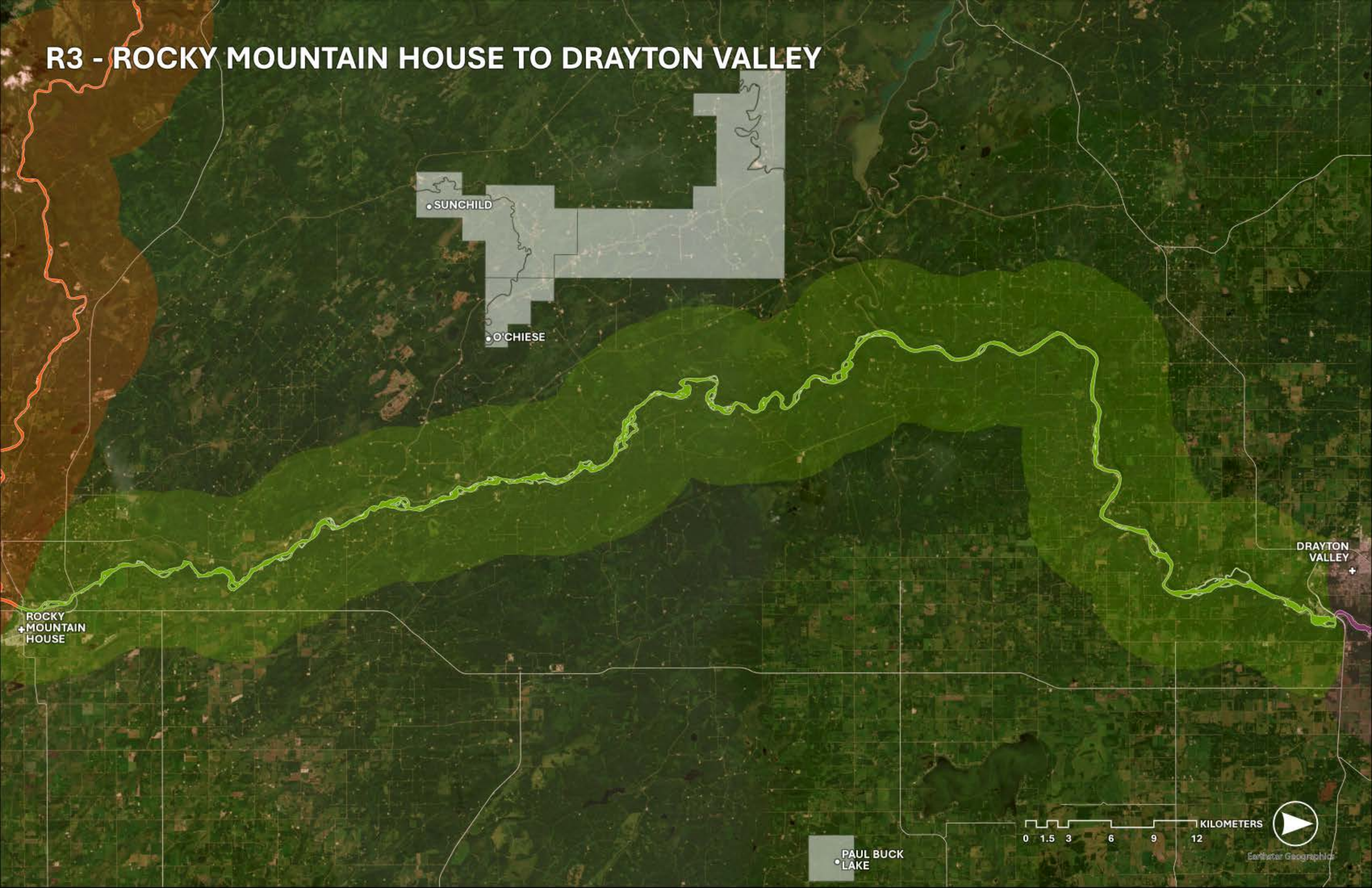




# R2 - NORDEGG BRIDGE TO ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE HISTORIC RESOURCE VALUES



# R3 - ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE TO DRAYTON VALLEY



• SUNCHILD

• O'CHIESE

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE  
+

DRAYTON VALLEY  
+

PAUL BUCK LAKE  
•

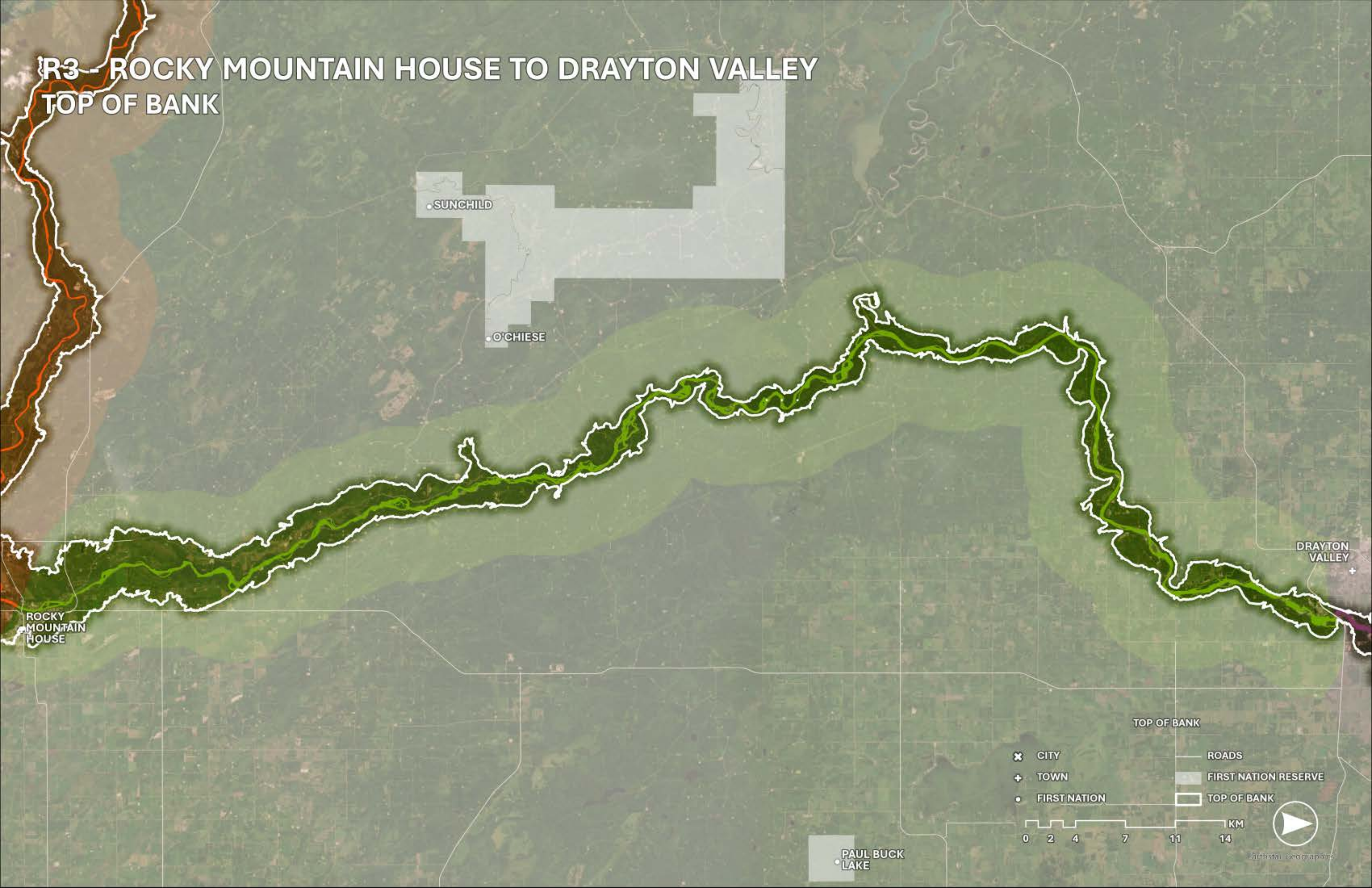
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Earthstar Geographics

# R3 - ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE TO DRAYTON VALLEY

## TOP OF BANK



ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

SUNCHILD

O'CHIESE

DRAYTON VALLEY

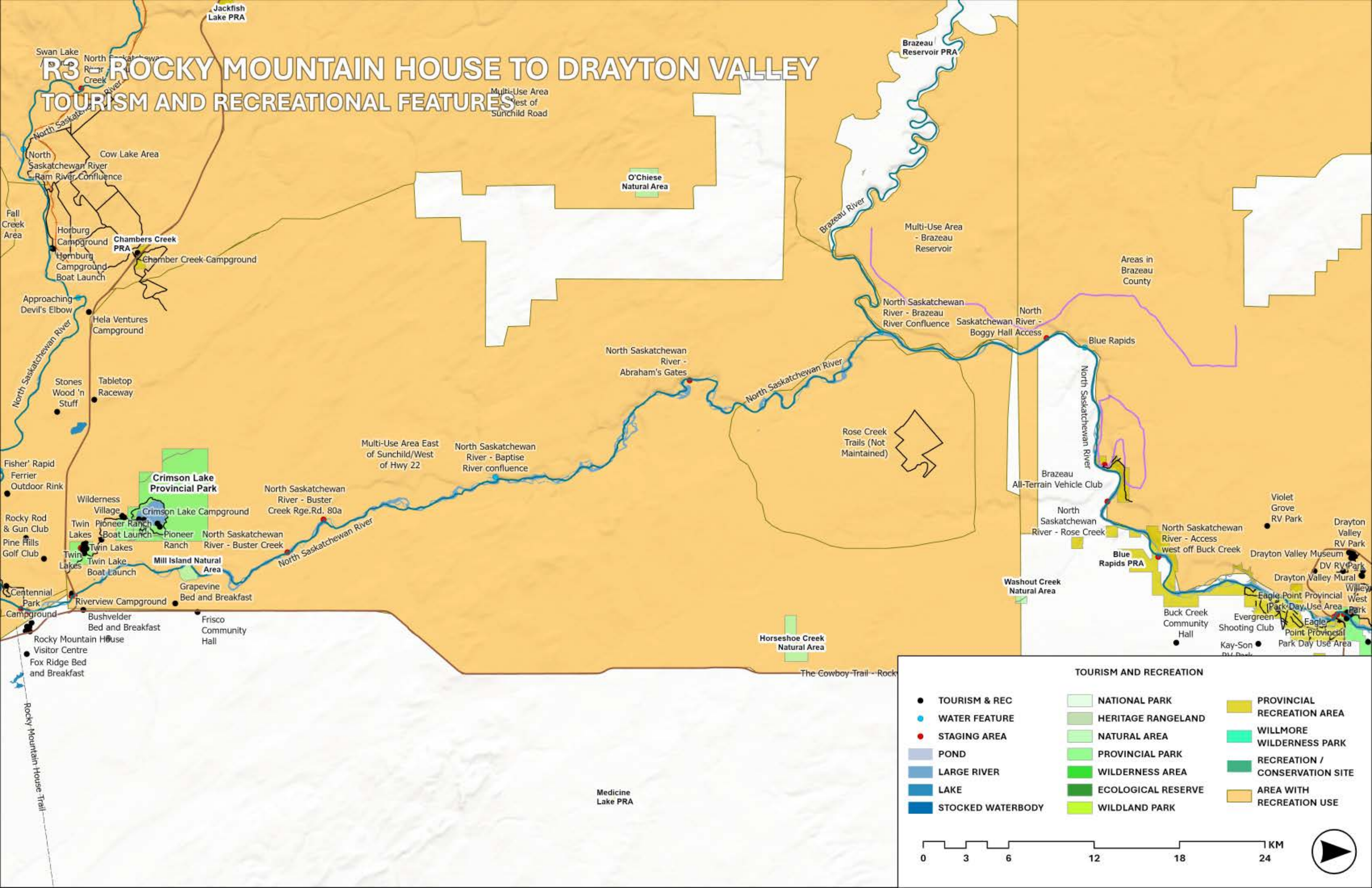
PAUL BUCK LAKE

- ✕ CITY
- + TOWN
- FIRST NATION
- ROADS
- FIRST NATION RESERVE
- TOP OF BANK



# R3 - ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE TO DRAYTON VALLEY

## TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL FEATURES



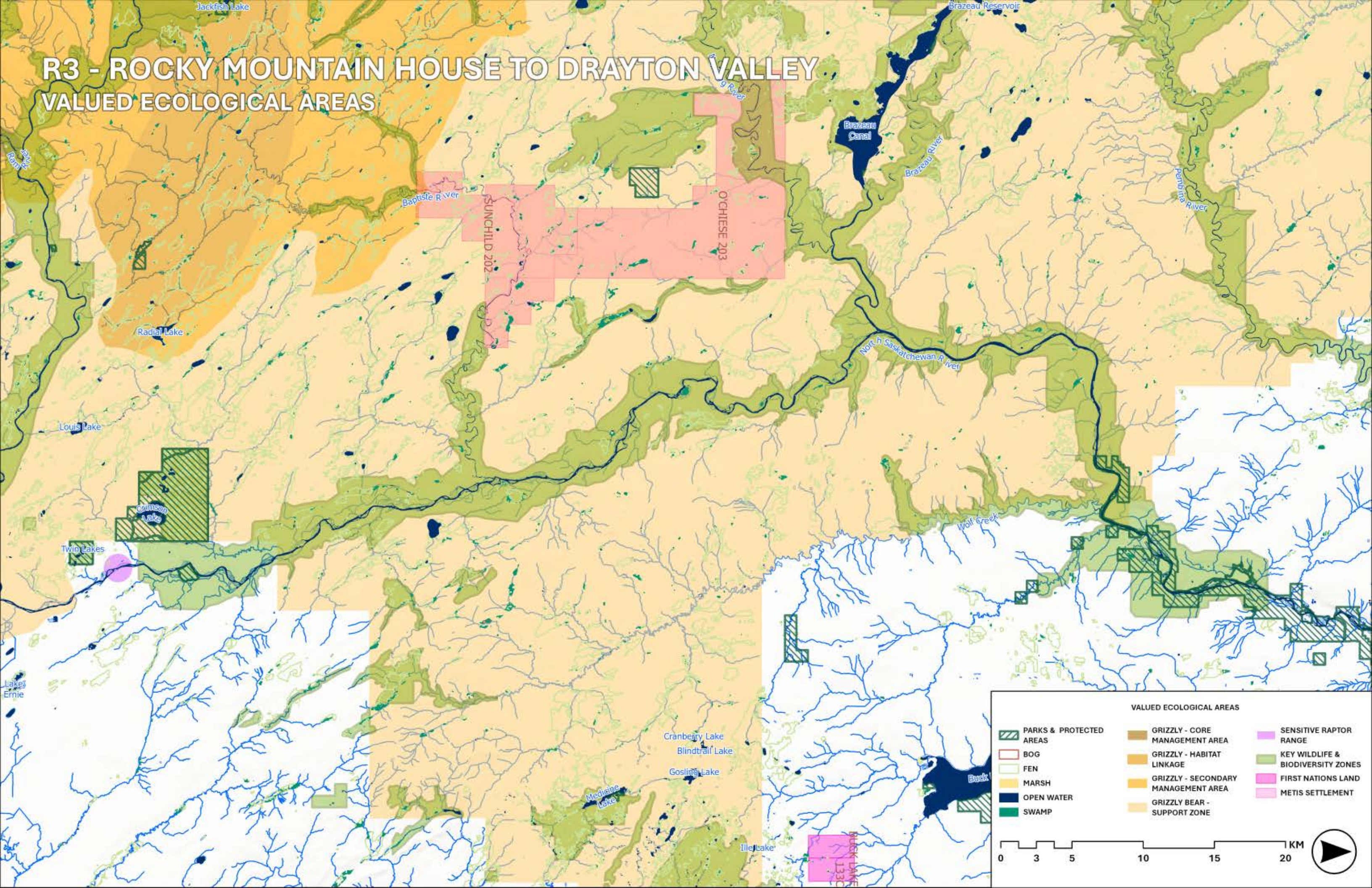
**TOURISM AND RECREATION**

● TOURISM & REC	□ NATIONAL PARK	■ PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREA
● WATER FEATURE	■ HERITAGE RANGELAND	■ WILLMORE WILDERNESS PARK
● STAGING AREA	□ NATURAL AREA	■ RECREATION / CONSERVATION SITE
■ POND	■ PROVINCIAL PARK	■ AREA WITH RECREATION USE
■ LARGE RIVER	■ WILDERNESS AREA	
■ LAKE	■ ECOLOGICAL RESERVE	
■ STOCKED WATERBODY	■ WILDLAND PARK	

0 3 6 12 18 24 KM

# R3 - ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE TO DRAYTON VALLEY

## VALUED ECOLOGICAL AREAS



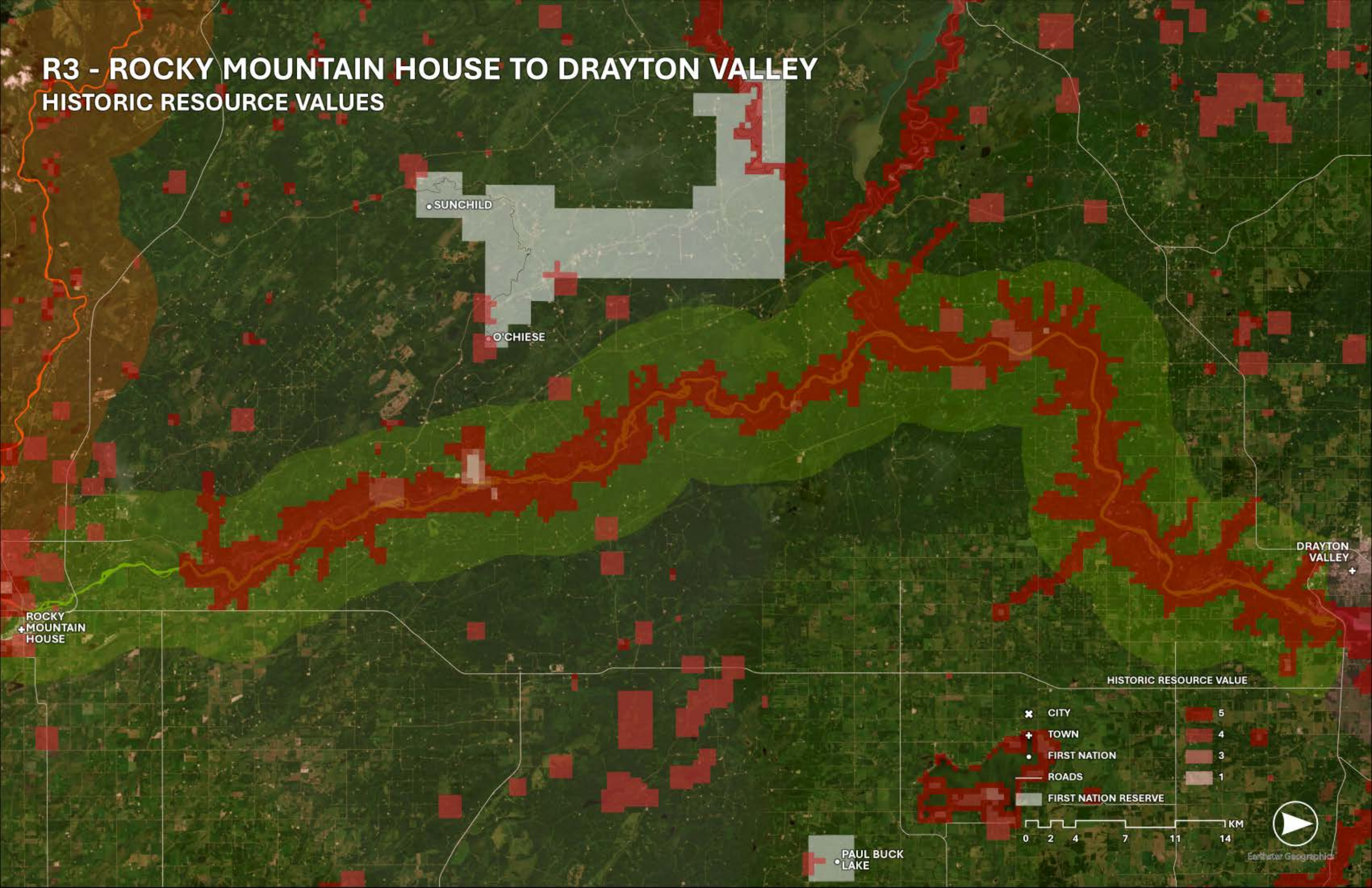
**VALUED ECOLOGICAL AREAS**

PARKS & PROTECTED AREAS	GRIZZLY - CORE MANAGEMENT AREA	SENSITIVE RAPTOR RANGE
BOG	GRIZZLY - HABITAT LINKAGE	KEY WILDLIFE & BIODIVERSITY ZONES
FEN	GRIZZLY - SECONDARY MANAGEMENT AREA	FIRST NATIONS LAND
MARSH	GRIZZLY BEAR - SUPPORT ZONE	METIS SETTLEMENT
OPEN WATER		
SWAMP		

0 3 5 10 15 20 KM

# R3 - ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE TO DRAYTON VALLEY

## HISTORIC RESOURCE VALUES



ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

SUNCHILD

O'CHIESE

DRAYTON VALLEY

PAUL BUCK LAKE

### HISTORIC RESOURCE VALUE

- ✕ CITY
  - + TOWN
  - FIRST NATION
  - ROADS
  - FIRST NATION RESERVE
- |   |
|---|
| 5 |
| 4 |
| 3 |
| 1 |



# R4 - DRAYTON VALLEY TO THE HIGHWAY 770 BRIDGE



PAUL

GENESEE

DRAYTON VALLEY

0 0.75 1.5 3 4.5 6 KILOMETERS



Blaine County, Blaine County, Windland County, Blaine

# R4 - DRAYTON VALLEY TO THE HIGHWAY 770 BRIDGE

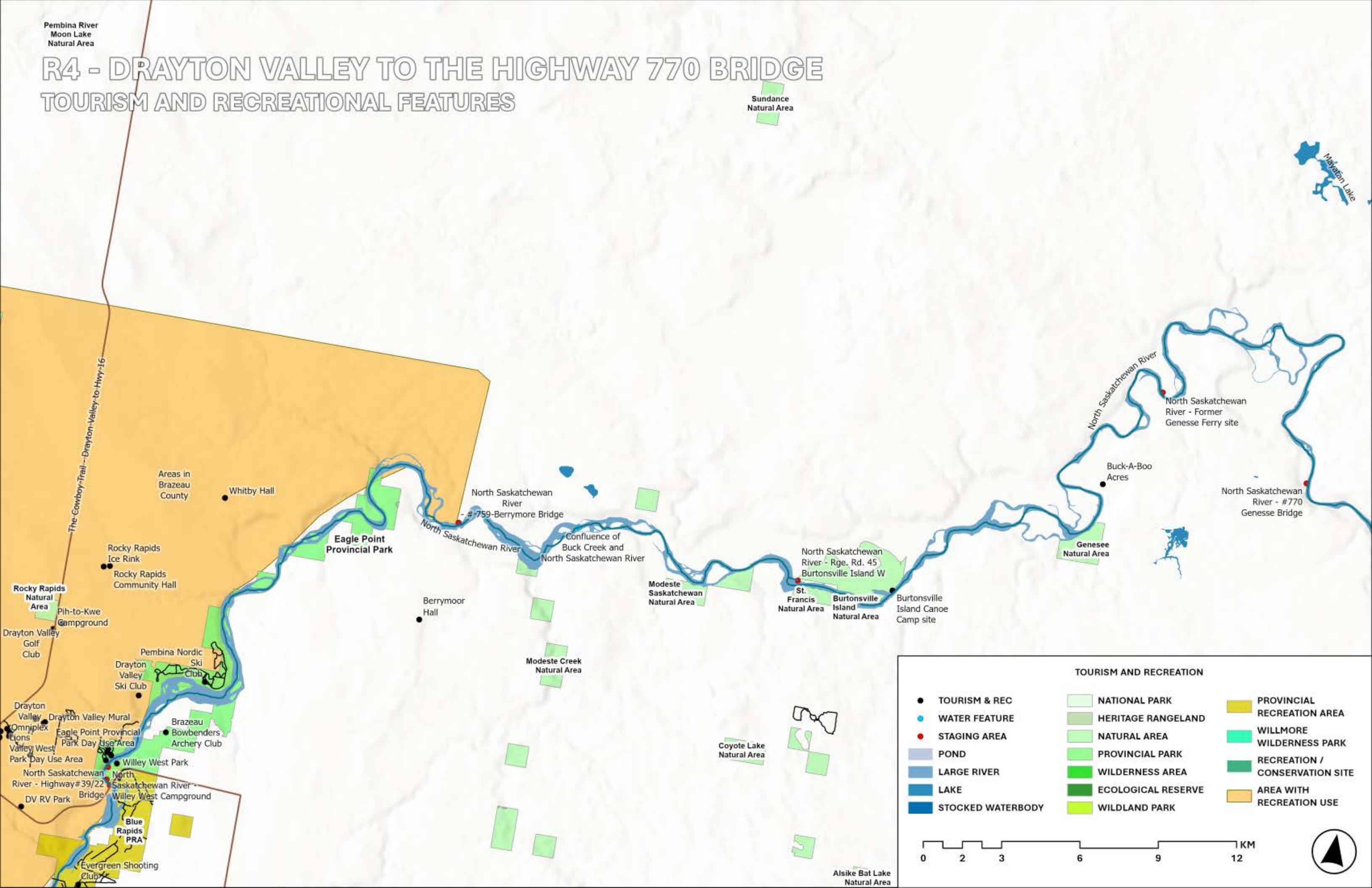




Pembina River  
Moon Lake  
Natural Area

# R4 - DRAYTON VALLEY TO THE HIGHWAY 770 BRIDGE

## TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL FEATURES



Sundance  
Natural Area

Mayfair Lake

The Cowboy Trail - Drayton Valley to Hwy 16

Areas in  
Brazeau  
County

Whitby Hall

North Saskatchewan  
River

- # 759-Berrymore Bridge

Eagle Point  
Provincial Park

Confluence of  
Buck Creek and  
North Saskatchewan River

Modeste Saskatchewan  
Natural Area

North Saskatchewan  
River - Rge. Rd. 45  
Burtonsville Island W

St. Francis  
Natural Area

Burtonsville  
Island  
Natural Area

Burtonsville  
Island Canoe  
Camp site

North Saskatchewan River

North Saskatchewan  
River - Former  
Genesee Ferry site

Buck-A-Boo  
Acres

North Saskatchewan  
River - #770  
Genesee Bridge

Genesee  
Natural Area

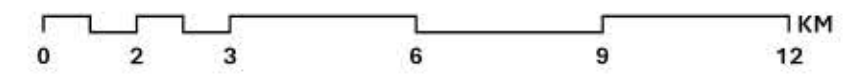
Berrymoor  
Hall

Modeste Creek  
Natural Area

Coyote Lake  
Natural Area

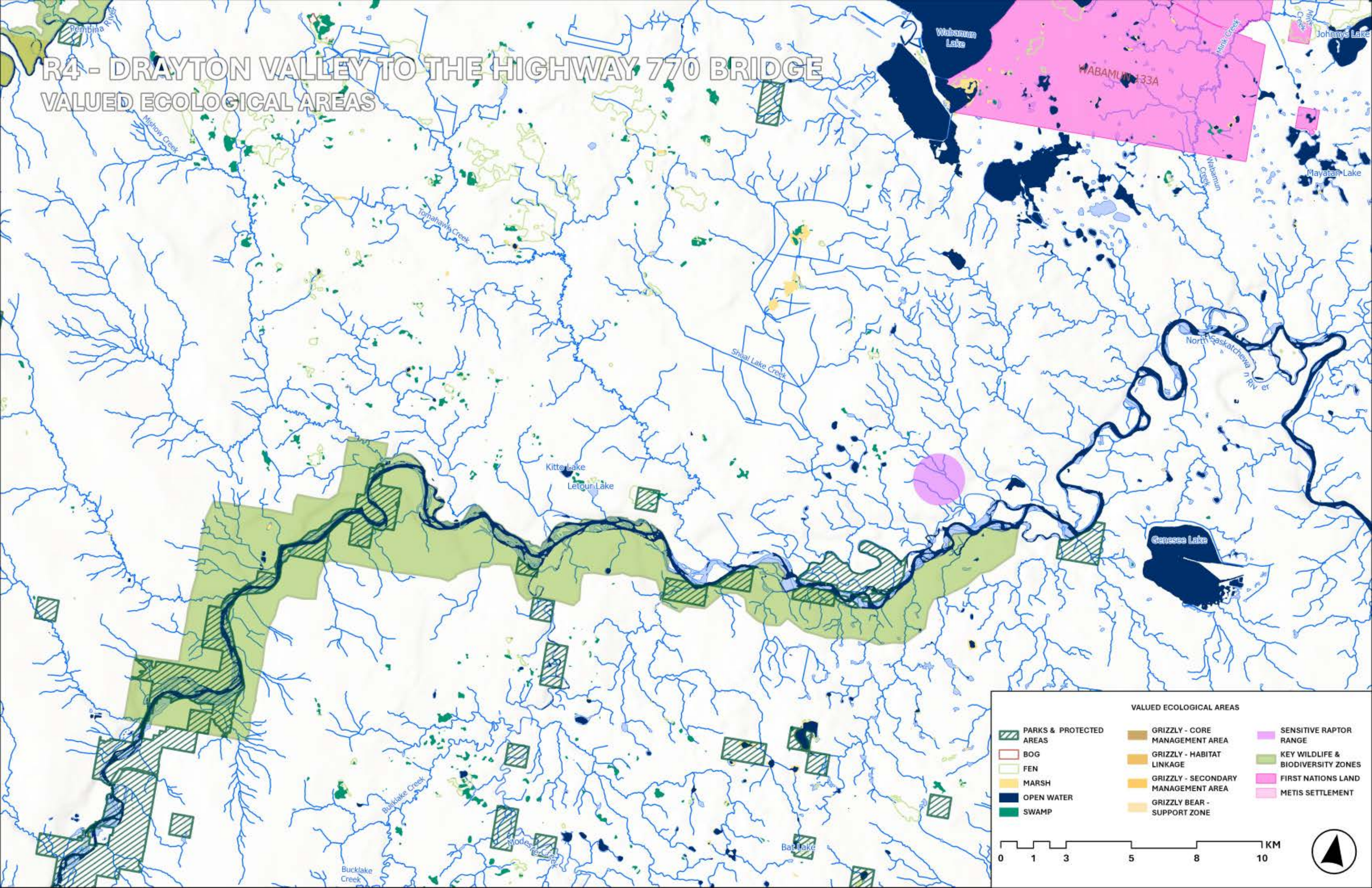
Alsike Bat Lake  
Natural Area

- |                     |                      |                                  |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| ● TOURISM & REC     | □ NATIONAL PARK      | ■ PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREA     |
| ● WATER FEATURE     | □ HERITAGE RANGELAND | ■ WILLMORE WILDERNESS PARK       |
| ● STAGING AREA      | □ NATURAL AREA       | ■ RECREATION / CONSERVATION SITE |
| ■ POND              | □ PROVINCIAL PARK    | ■ AREA WITH RECREATION USE       |
| ■ LARGE RIVER       | ■ WILDERNESS AREA    |                                  |
| ■ LAKE              | ■ ECOLOGICAL RESERVE |                                  |
| ■ STOCKED WATERBODY | ■ WILDLAND PARK      |                                  |

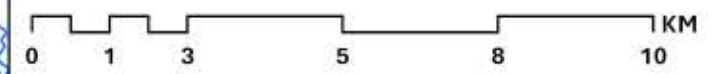


# R4 - DRAYTON VALLEY TO THE HIGHWAY 770 BRIDGE

## VALUED ECOLOGICAL AREAS

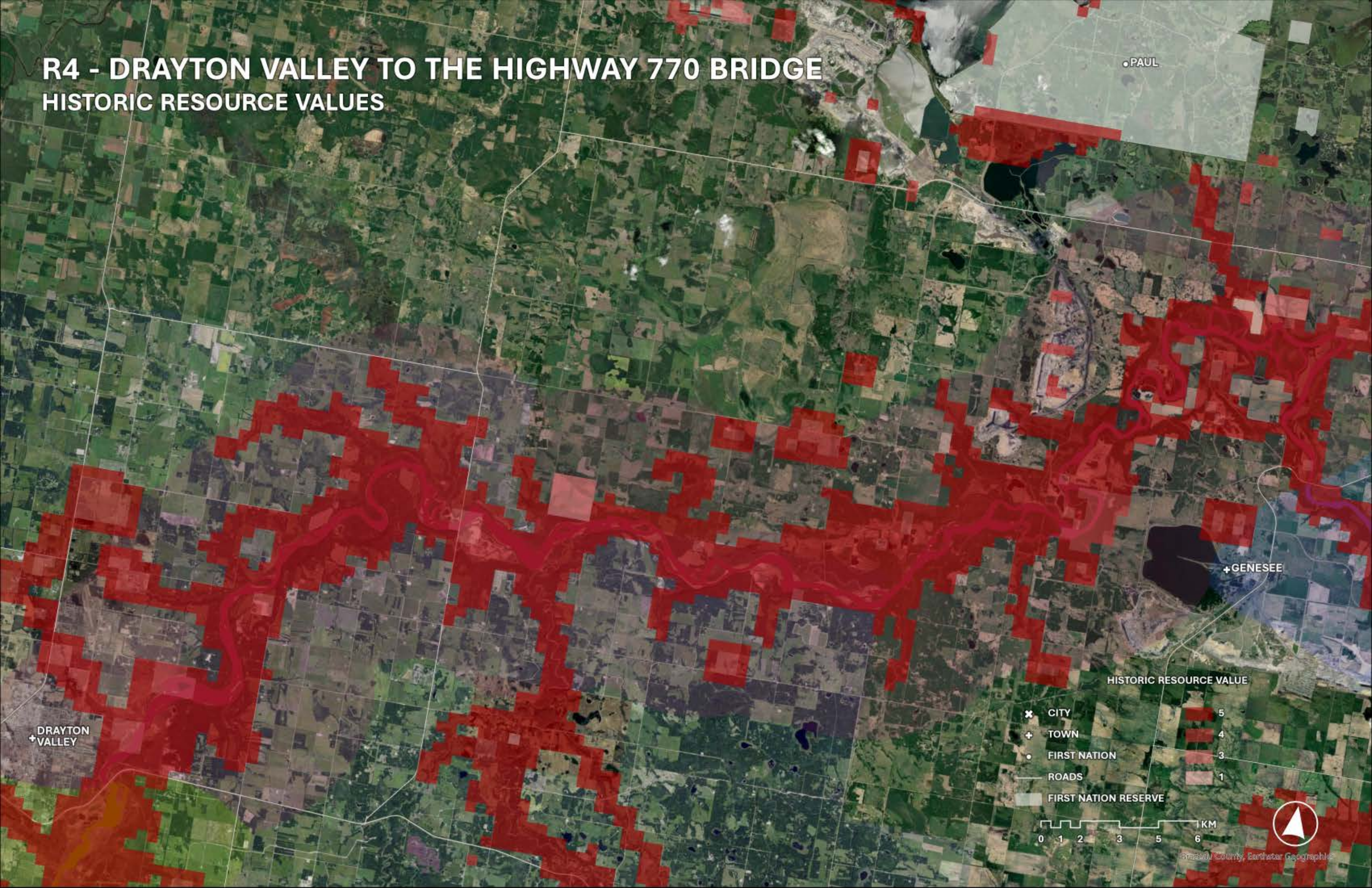


VALUED ECOLOGICAL AREAS			
	PARKS & PROTECTED AREAS		SENSITIVE RAPTOR RANGE
	BOG		KEY WILDLIFE & BIODIVERSITY ZONES
	FEN		FIRST NATIONS LAND
	MARSH		METIS SETTLEMENT
	OPEN WATER		GRIZZLY - CORE MANAGEMENT AREA
	SWAMP		GRIZZLY - HABITAT LINKAGE
			GRIZZLY - SECONDARY MANAGEMENT AREA
			GRIZZLY BEAR - SUPPORT ZONE

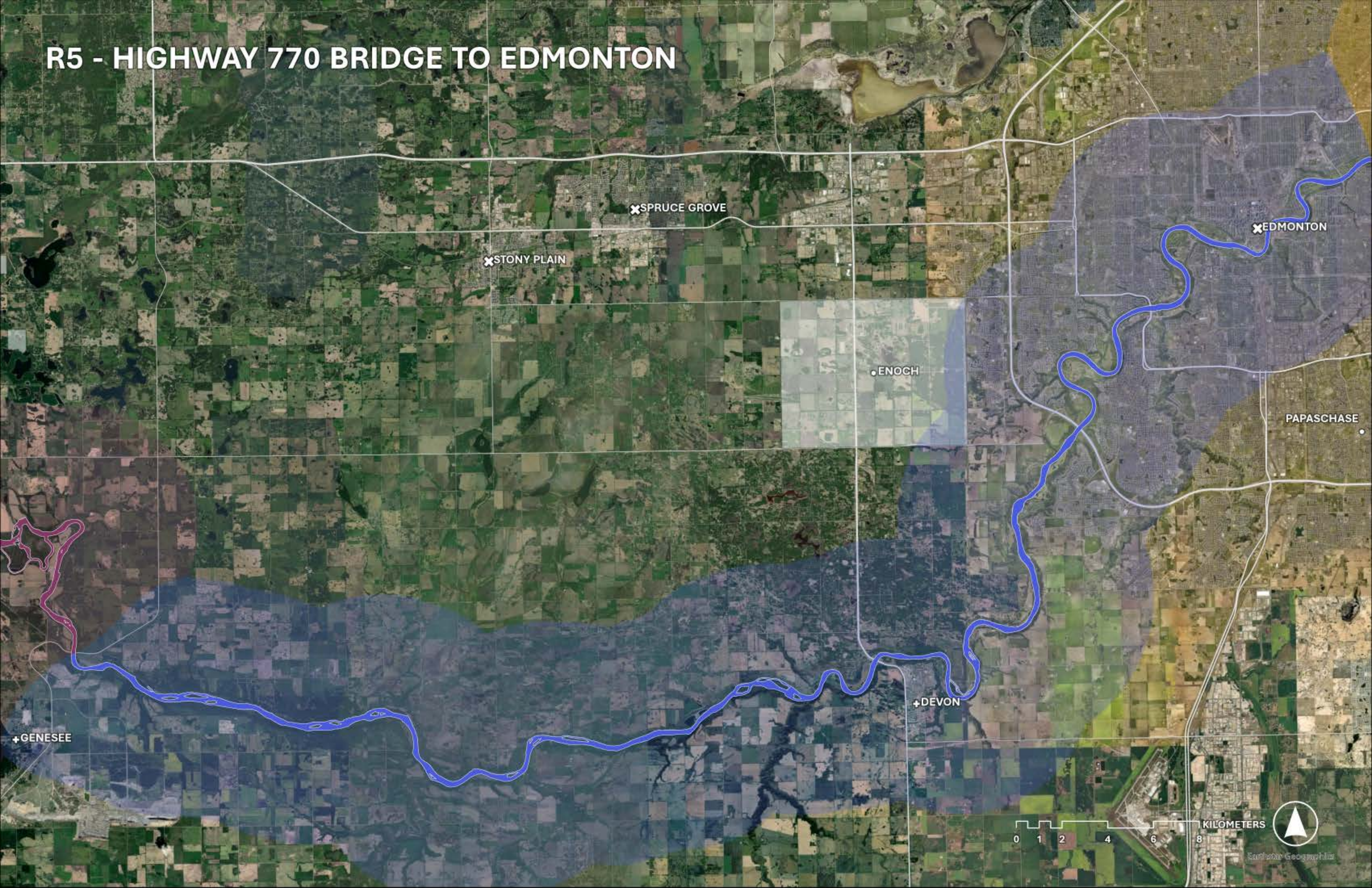


# R4 - DRAYTON VALLEY TO THE HIGHWAY 770 BRIDGE

## HISTORIC RESOURCE VALUES



# R5 - HIGHWAY 770 BRIDGE TO EDMONTON



x SPRUCE GROVE

x STONY PLAIN

• ENOCH

x EDMONTON

PAPASCHASE

+ DEVON

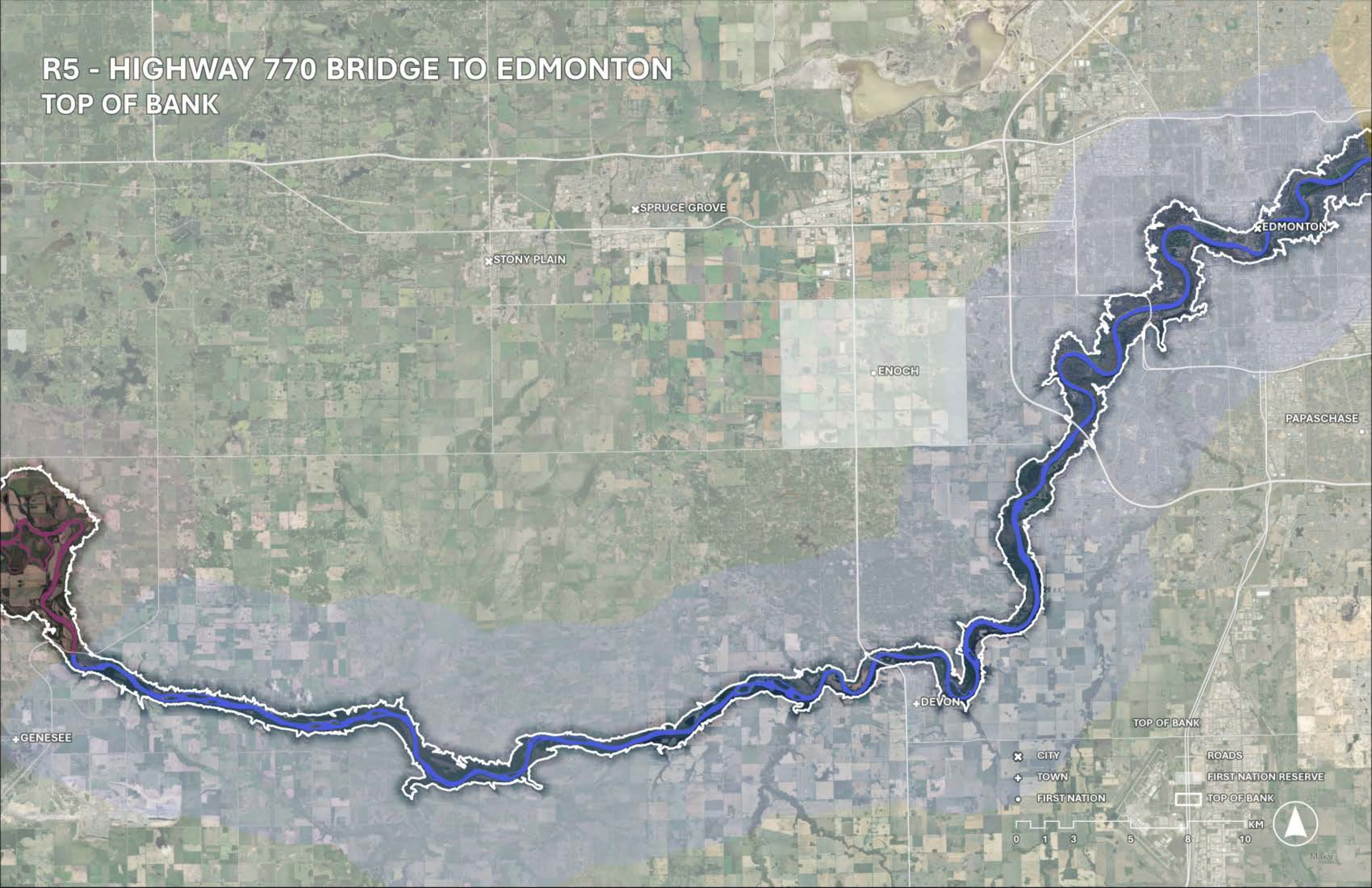
+ GENESEE

0 1 2 4 6 8  
KILOMETERS

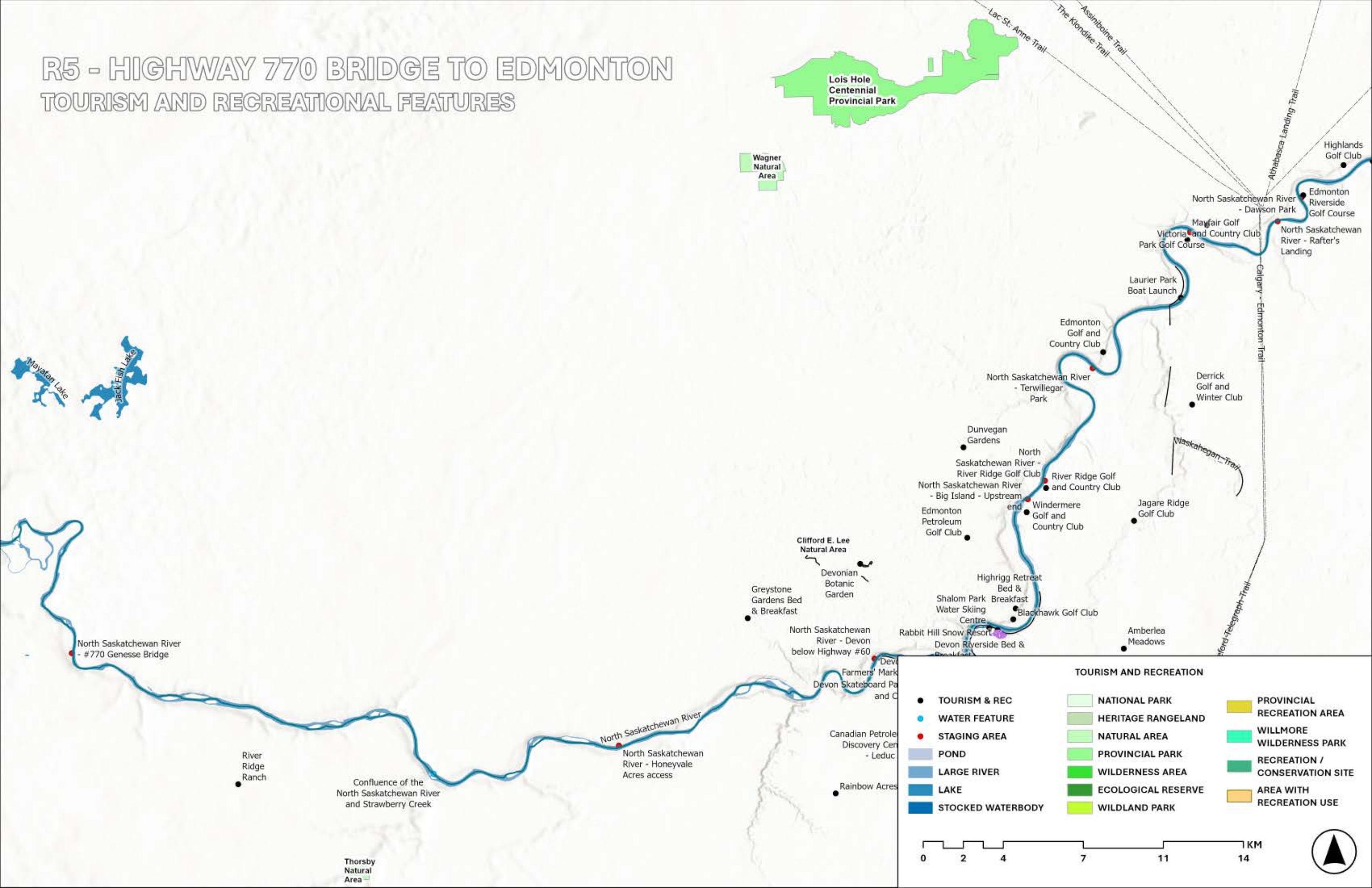


Earthstar Geographics

# R5 - HIGHWAY 770 BRIDGE TO EDMONTON TOP OF BANK



# R5 - HIGHWAY 770 BRIDGE TO EDMONTON TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL FEATURES



**TOURISM AND RECREATION**

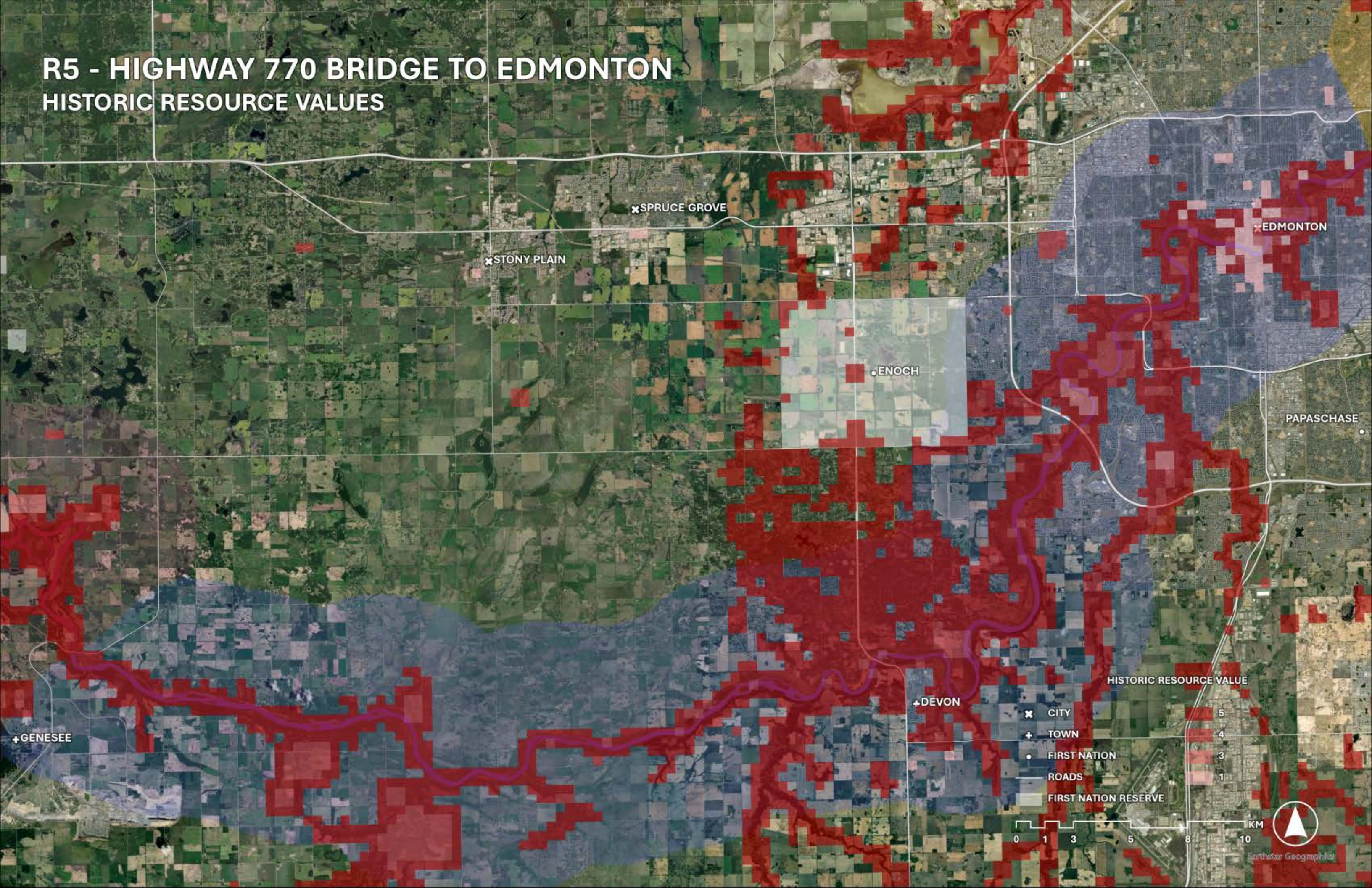
● TOURISM & REC	□ NATIONAL PARK	□ PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREA
● WATER FEATURE	□ HERITAGE RANGELAND	□ WILLMORE WILDERNESS PARK
● STAGING AREA	□ NATURAL AREA	□ RECREATION / CONSERVATION SITE
□ POND	□ PROVINCIAL PARK	□ AREA WITH RECREATION USE
□ LARGE RIVER	□ WILDERNESS AREA	
□ LAKE	□ ECOLOGICAL RESERVE	
□ STOCKED WATERBODY	□ WILDLAND PARK	

0 2 4 7 11 14 KM



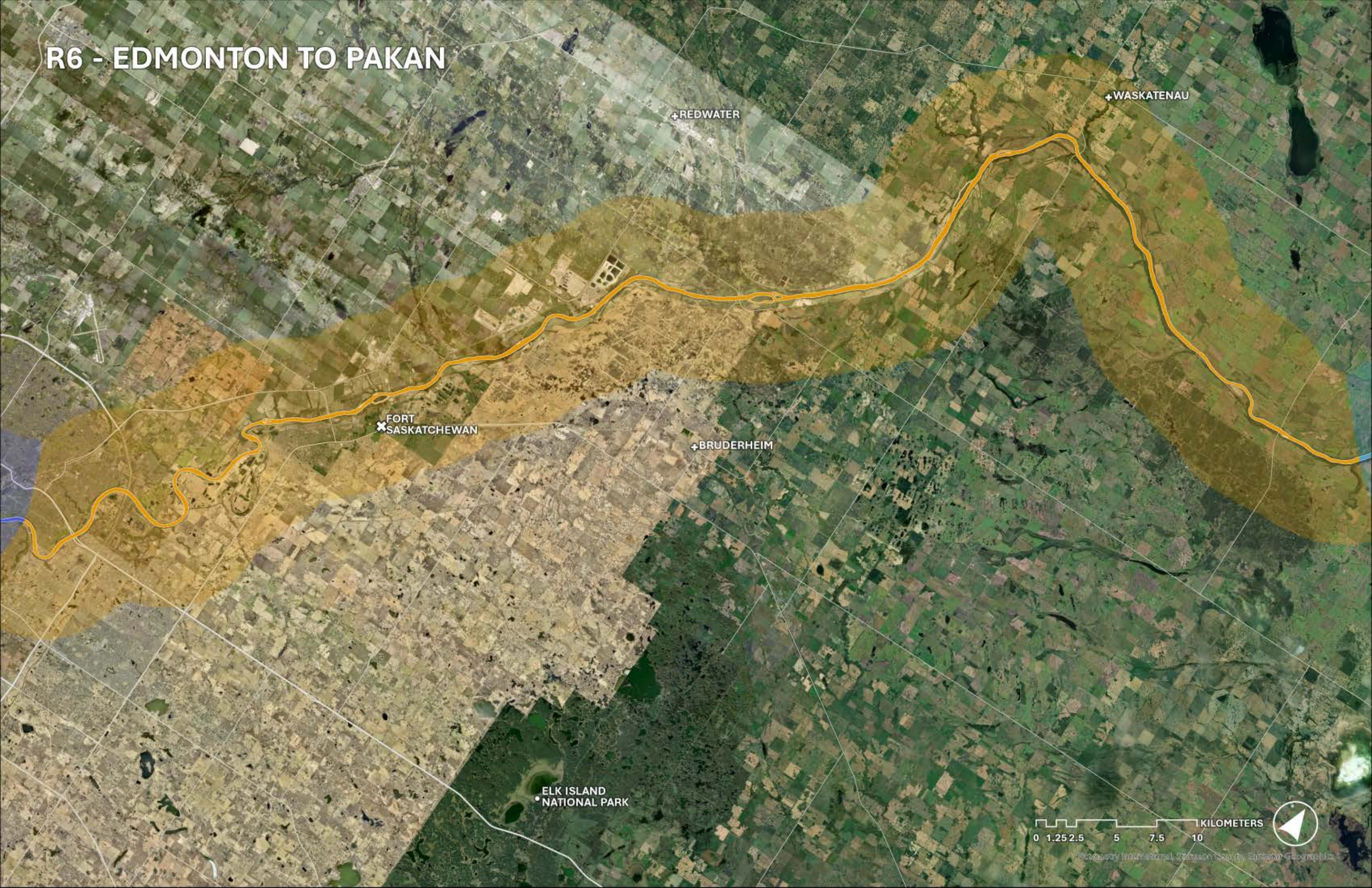
# R5 - HIGHWAY 770 BRIDGE TO EDMONTON

## HISTORIC RESOURCE VALUES





# R6 - EDMONTON TO PAKAN



+ REDWATER

+ WASKATENAU

\* FORT SASKATCHEWAN

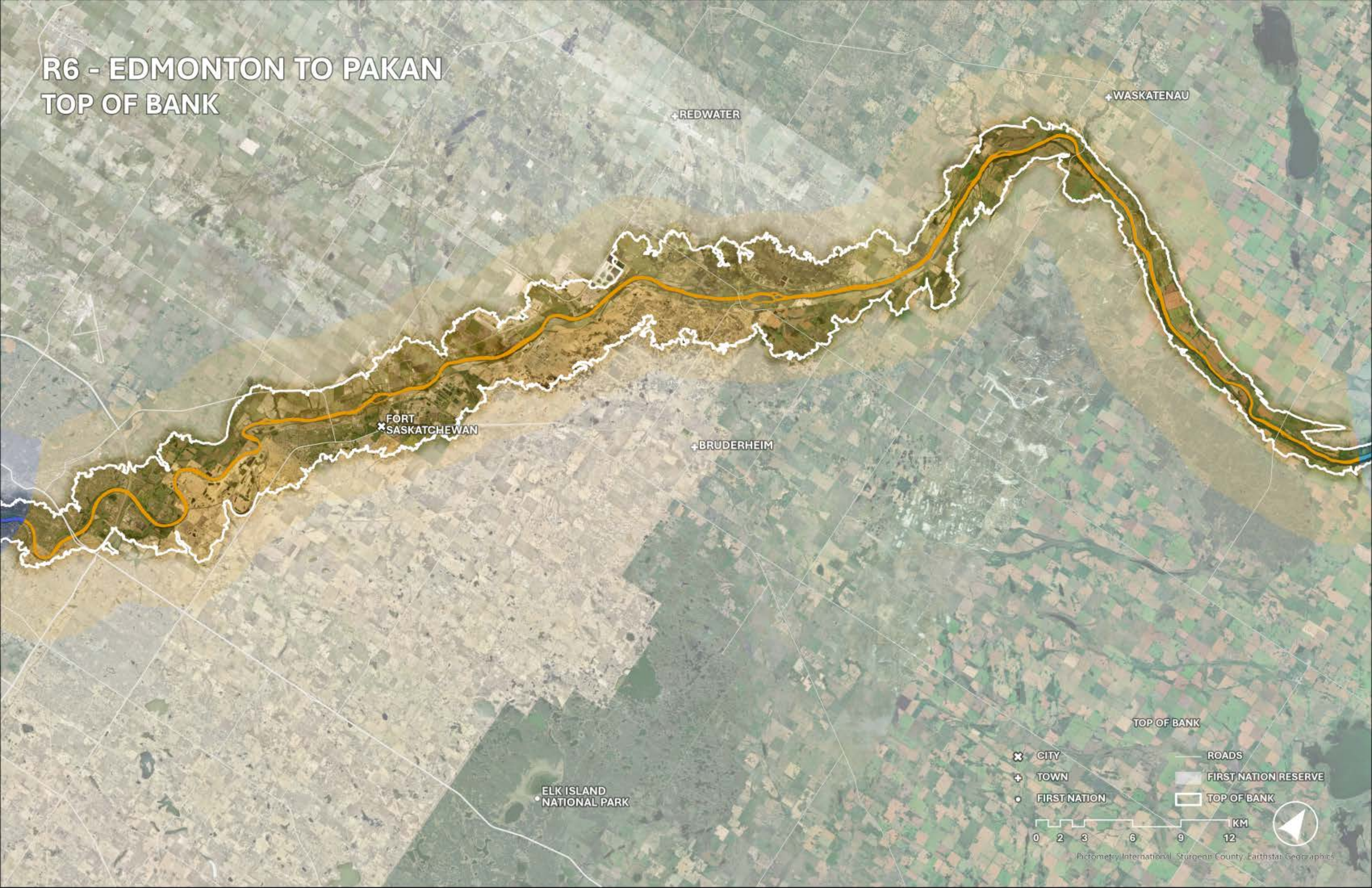
+ BRUDERHEIM

• ELK ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

0 1.25 2.5 5 7.5 10 KILOMETERS



# R6 - EDMONTON TO PAKAN TOP OF BANK



+ REDWATER

+ WASKATENAU

x FORT SASKATCHEWAN

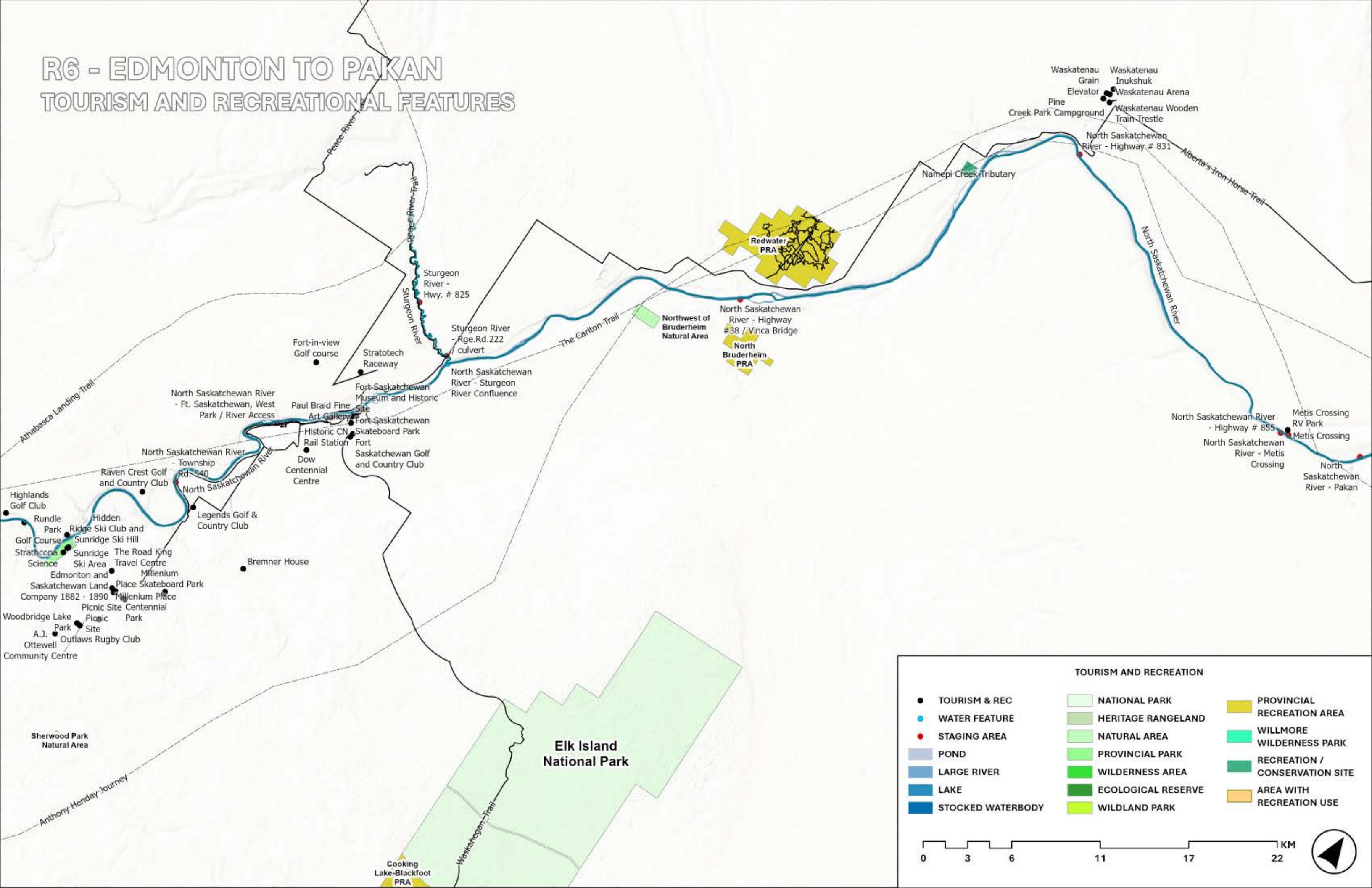
+ BRUDERHEIM

• ELK ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

- x CITY
- + TOWN
- FIRST NATION
- ROADS
- FIRST NATION RESERVE
- TOP OF BANK



# R6 - EDMONTON TO PAKAN TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL FEATURES

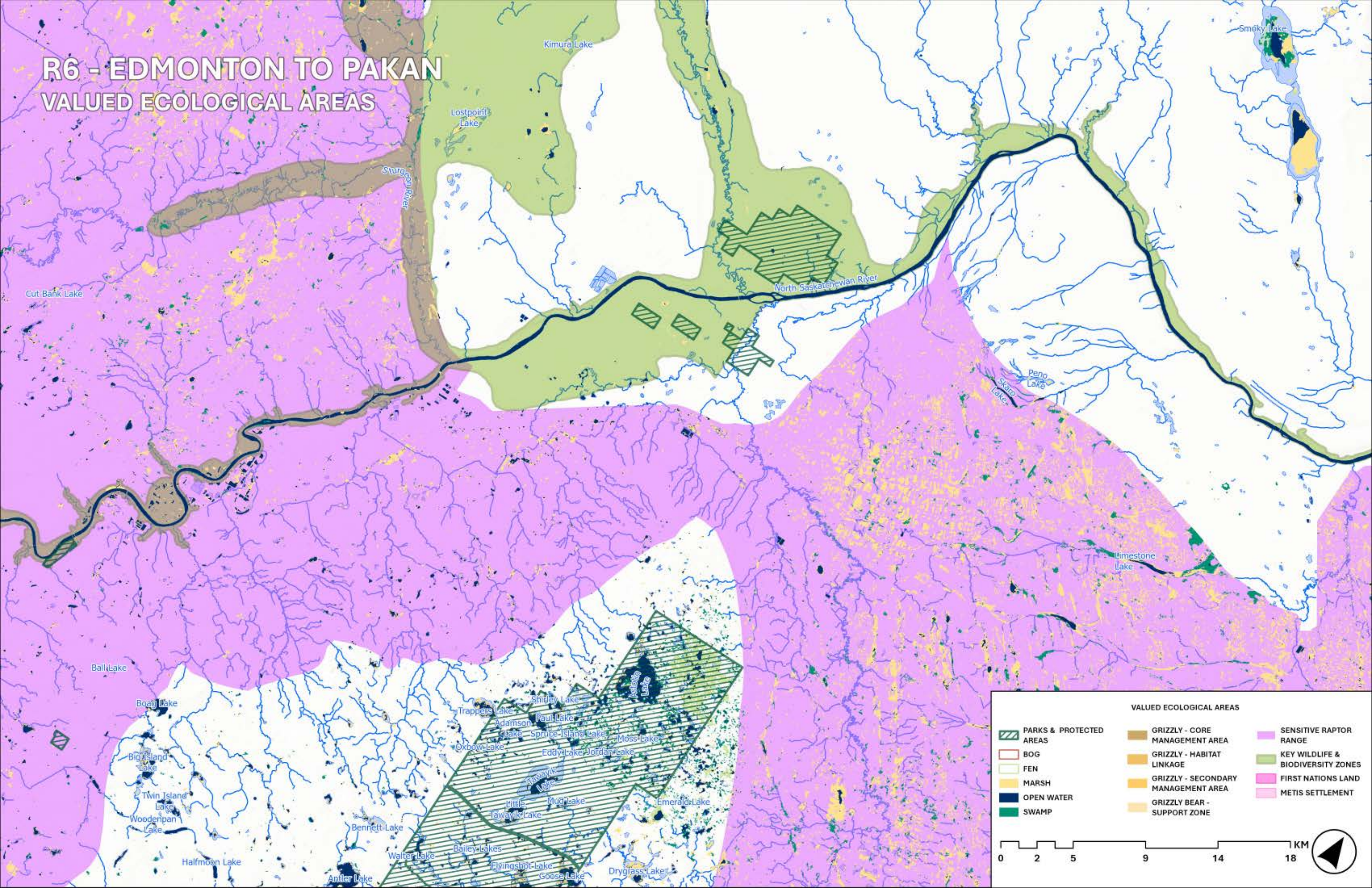


**TOURISM AND RECREATION**

● TOURISM & REC	□ NATIONAL PARK	■ PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREA
● WATER FEATURE	□ HERITAGE RANGELAND	■ WILLMORE WILDERNESS PARK
● STAGING AREA	□ NATURAL AREA	■ RECREATION / CONSERVATION SITE
■ POND	□ PROVINCIAL PARK	■ AREA WITH RECREATION USE
■ LARGE RIVER	■ WILDERNESS AREA	
■ LAKE	■ ECOLOGICAL RESERVE	
■ STOCKED WATERBODY	■ WILDLAND PARK	

0 3 6 11 17 22 KM

# R6 - EDMONTON TO PAKAN VALUED ECOLOGICAL AREAS

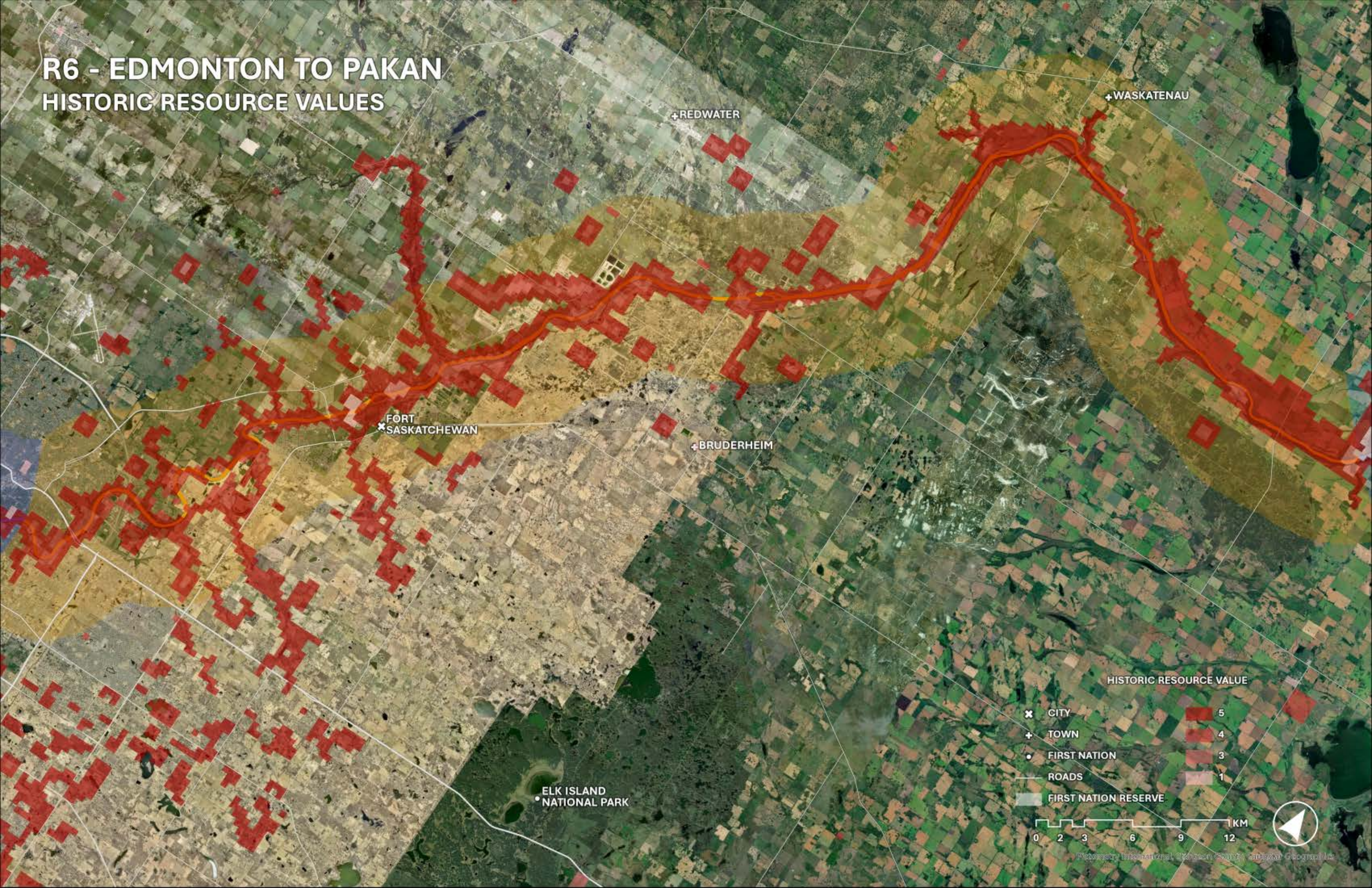


**VALUED ECOLOGICAL AREAS**

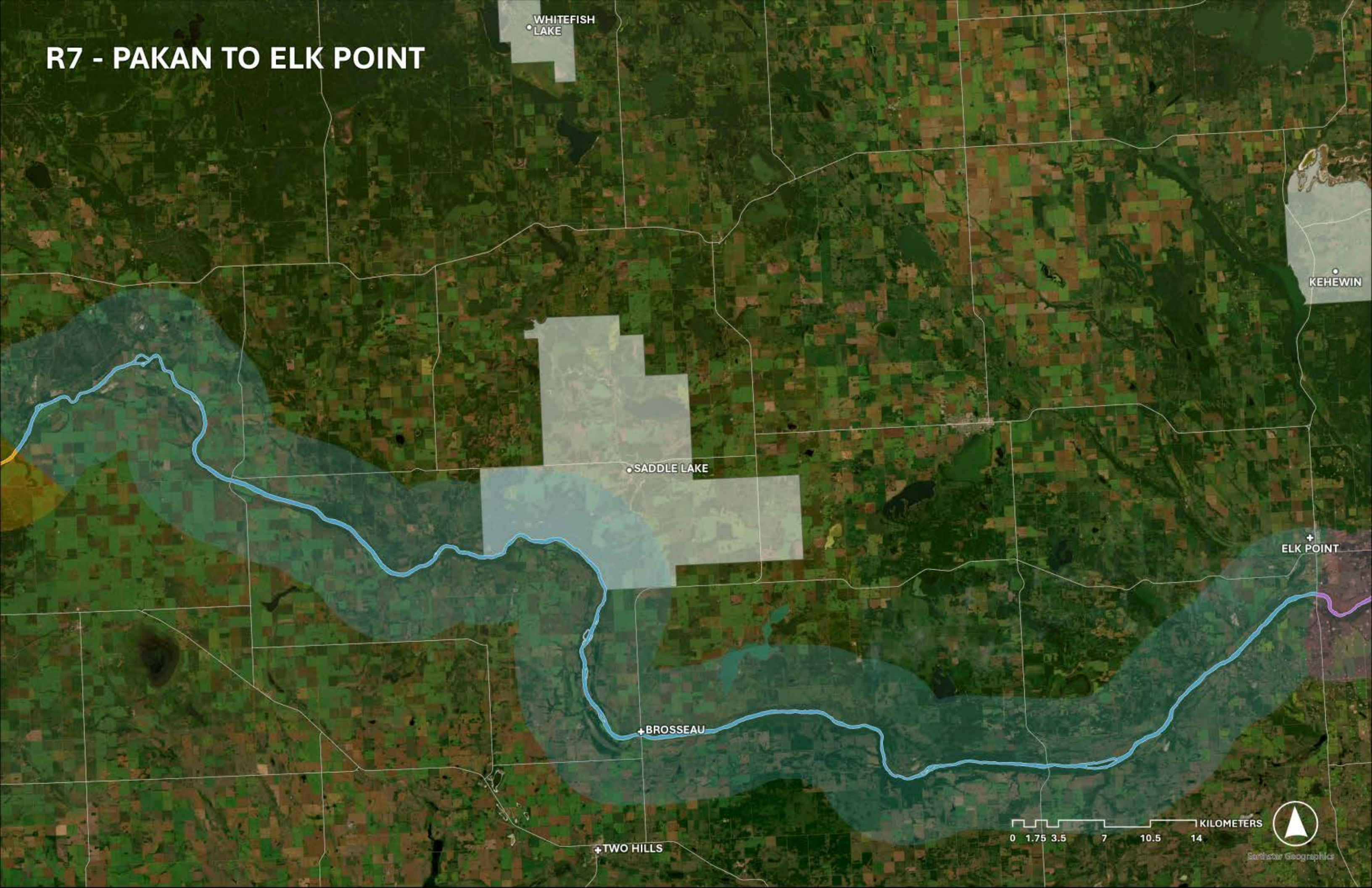
PARKS & PROTECTED AREAS	GRIZZLY - CORE MANAGEMENT AREA	SENSITIVE RAPTOR RANGE
BOG	GRIZZLY - HABITAT LINKAGE	KEY WILDLIFE & BIODIVERSITY ZONES
FEN	GRIZZLY - SECONDARY MANAGEMENT AREA	FIRST NATIONS LAND
MARSH	GRIZZLY BEAR - SUPPORT ZONE	METIS SETTLEMENT
OPEN WATER		
SWAMP		

0 2 5 9 14 18 KM

# R6 - EDMONTON TO PAKAN HISTORIC RESOURCE VALUES



# R7 - PAKAN TO ELK POINT



• WHITEFISH LAKE

• KEHEWIN

• SADDLE LAKE

+ ELK POINT

+ BROSEAU

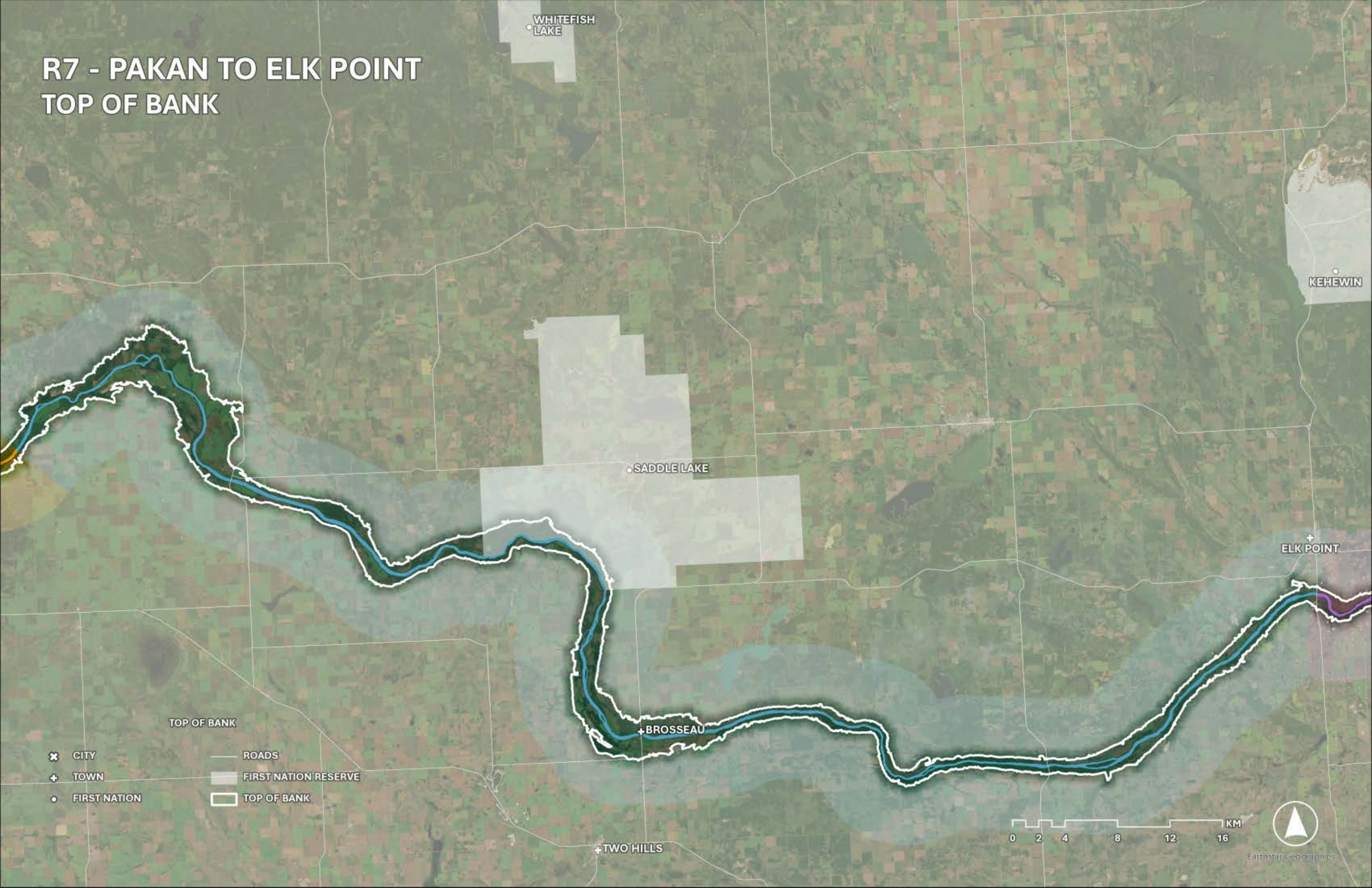
+ TWO HILLS

0 1.75 3.5 7 10.5 14 KILOMETERS



Smithstar Geographics

# R7 - PAKAN TO ELK POINT TOP OF BANK



WHITEFISH LAKE

KEHEWIN

SADDLE LAKE

ELK POINT

BROSSEAU

TWO HILLS

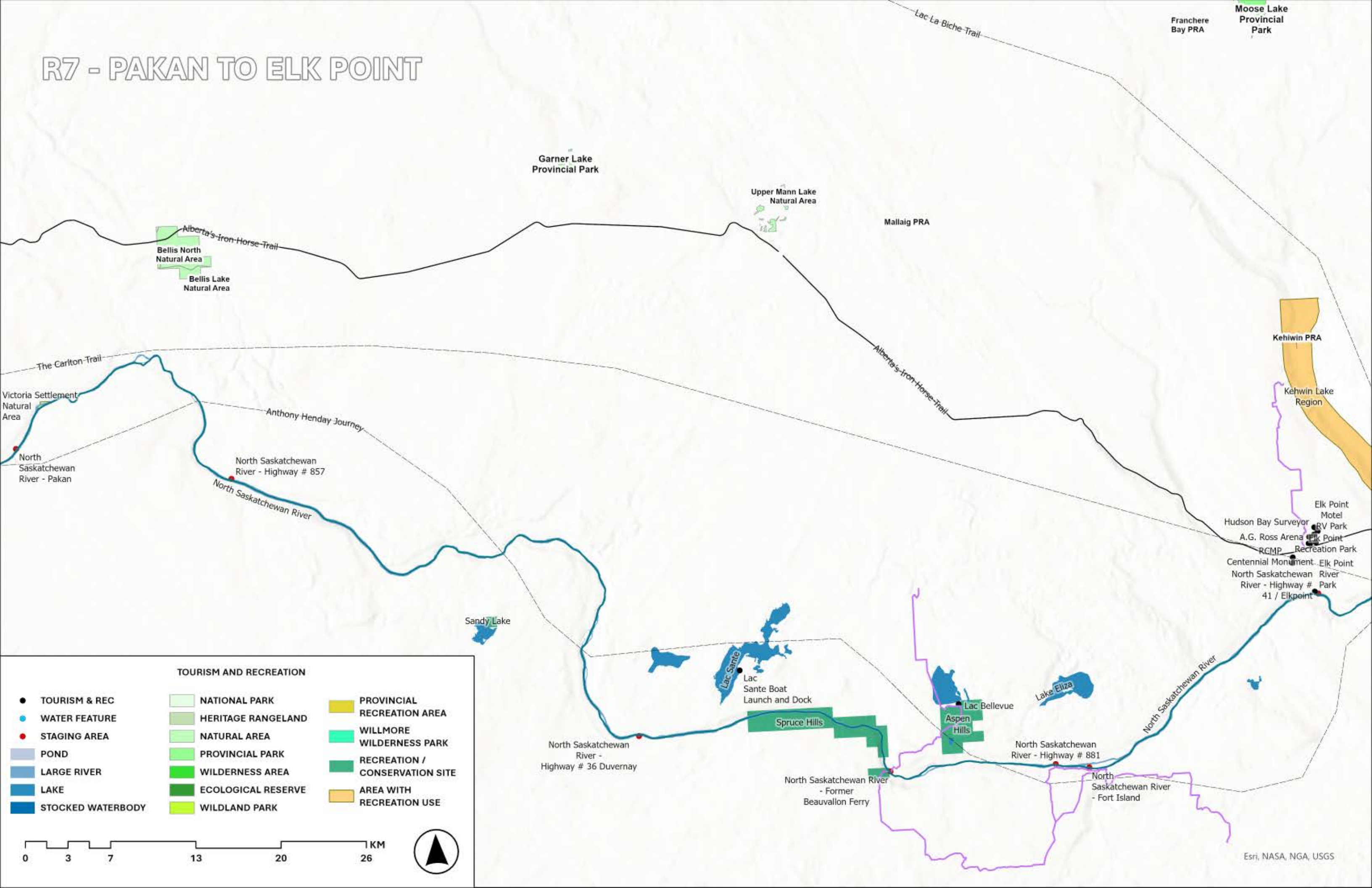
TOP OF BANK

- ✕ CITY
- + TOWN
- FIRST NATION

- ROADS
- FIRST NATION RESERVE
- TOP OF BANK

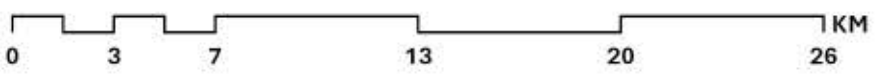


# R7 - PAKAN TO ELK POINT



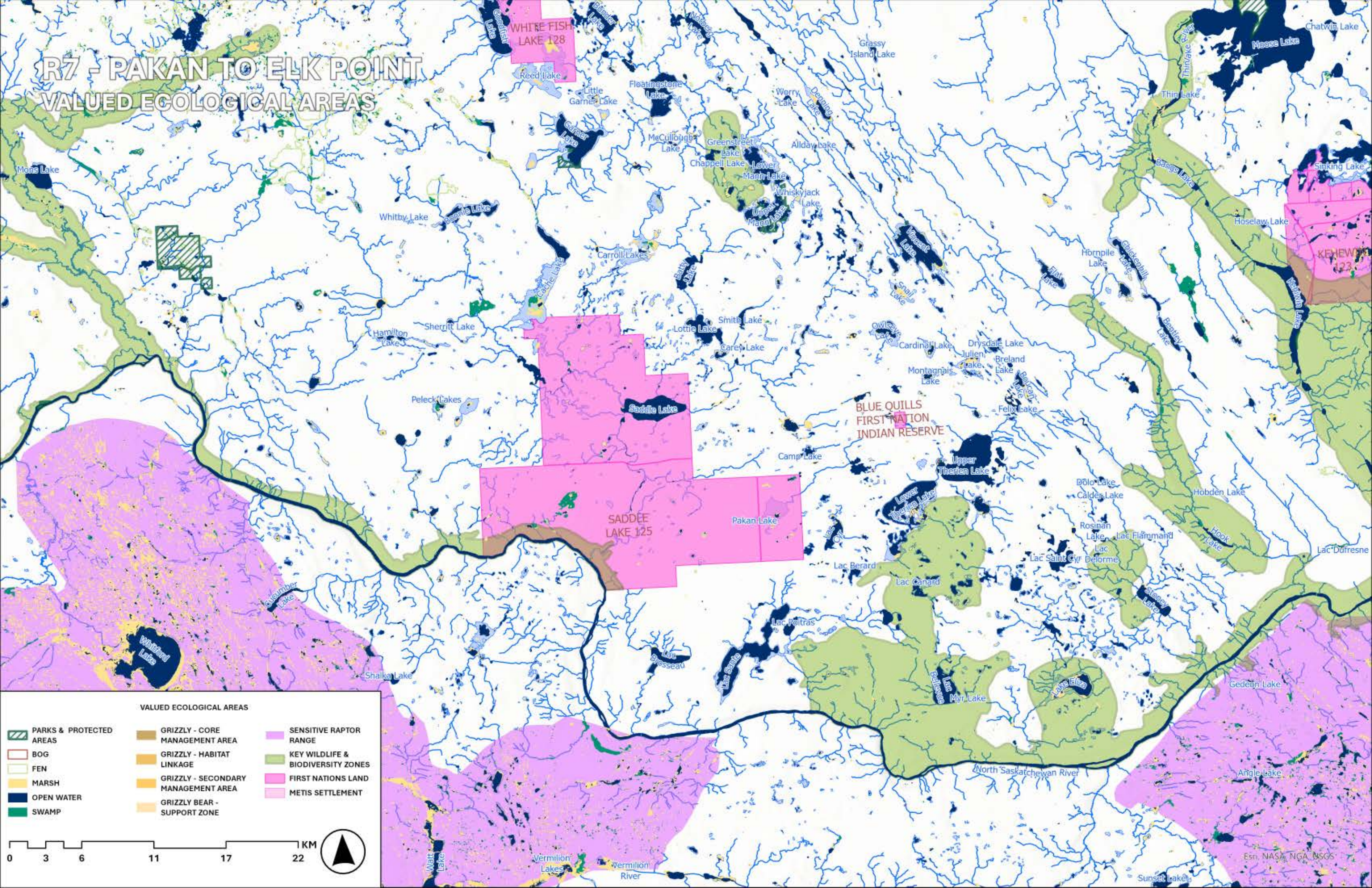
## TOURISM AND RECREATION

- |                     |                      |                                  |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| ● TOURISM & REC     | □ NATIONAL PARK      | ■ PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREA     |
| ● WATER FEATURE     | □ HERITAGE RANGELAND | ■ WILLMORE WILDERNESS PARK       |
| ● STAGING AREA      | □ NATURAL AREA       | ■ RECREATION / CONSERVATION SITE |
| ■ POND              | ■ PROVINCIAL PARK    | ■ AREA WITH RECREATION USE       |
| ■ LARGE RIVER       | ■ WILDERNESS AREA    |                                  |
| ■ LAKE              | ■ ECOLOGICAL RESERVE |                                  |
| ■ STOCKED WATERBODY | ■ WILDLAND PARK      |                                  |





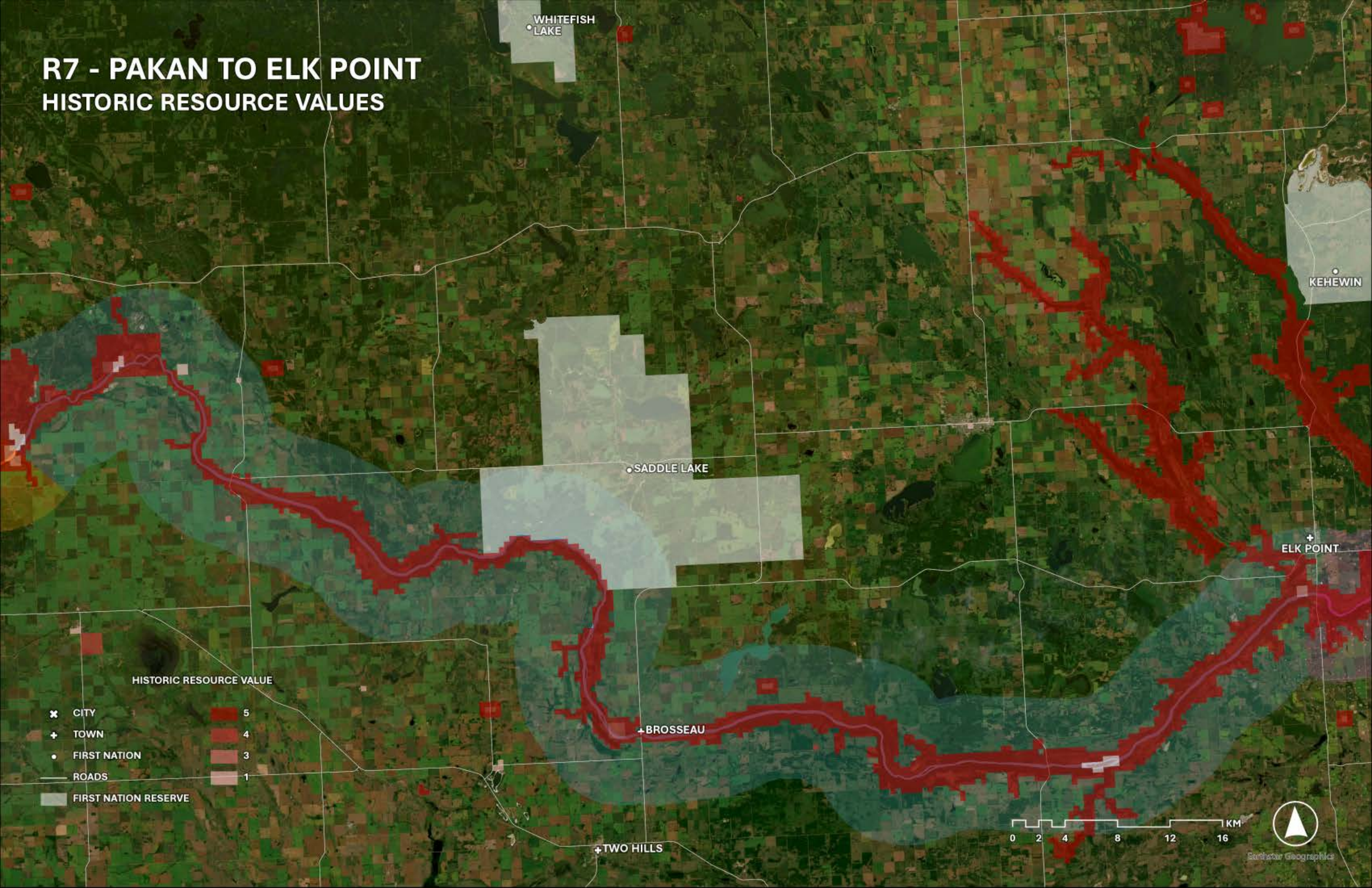
# R7 - PAKAN TO ELK POINT VALUED ECOLOGICAL AREAS



- VALUED ECOLOGICAL AREAS**
- PARKS & PROTECTED AREAS
  - BOG
  - FEN
  - MARSH
  - OPEN WATER
  - SWAMP
  - GRIZZLY - CORE MANAGEMENT AREA
  - GRIZZLY - HABITAT LINKAGE
  - GRIZZLY - SECONDARY MANAGEMENT AREA
  - GRIZZLY BEAR - SUPPORT ZONE
  - SENSITIVE RAPTOR RANGE
  - KEY WILDLIFE & BIODIVERSITY ZONES
  - FIRST NATIONS LAND
  - METIS SETTLEMENT



# R7 - PAKAN TO ELK POINT HISTORIC RESOURCE VALUES



WHITEFISH LAKE

KEHEWIN

SADDLE LAKE

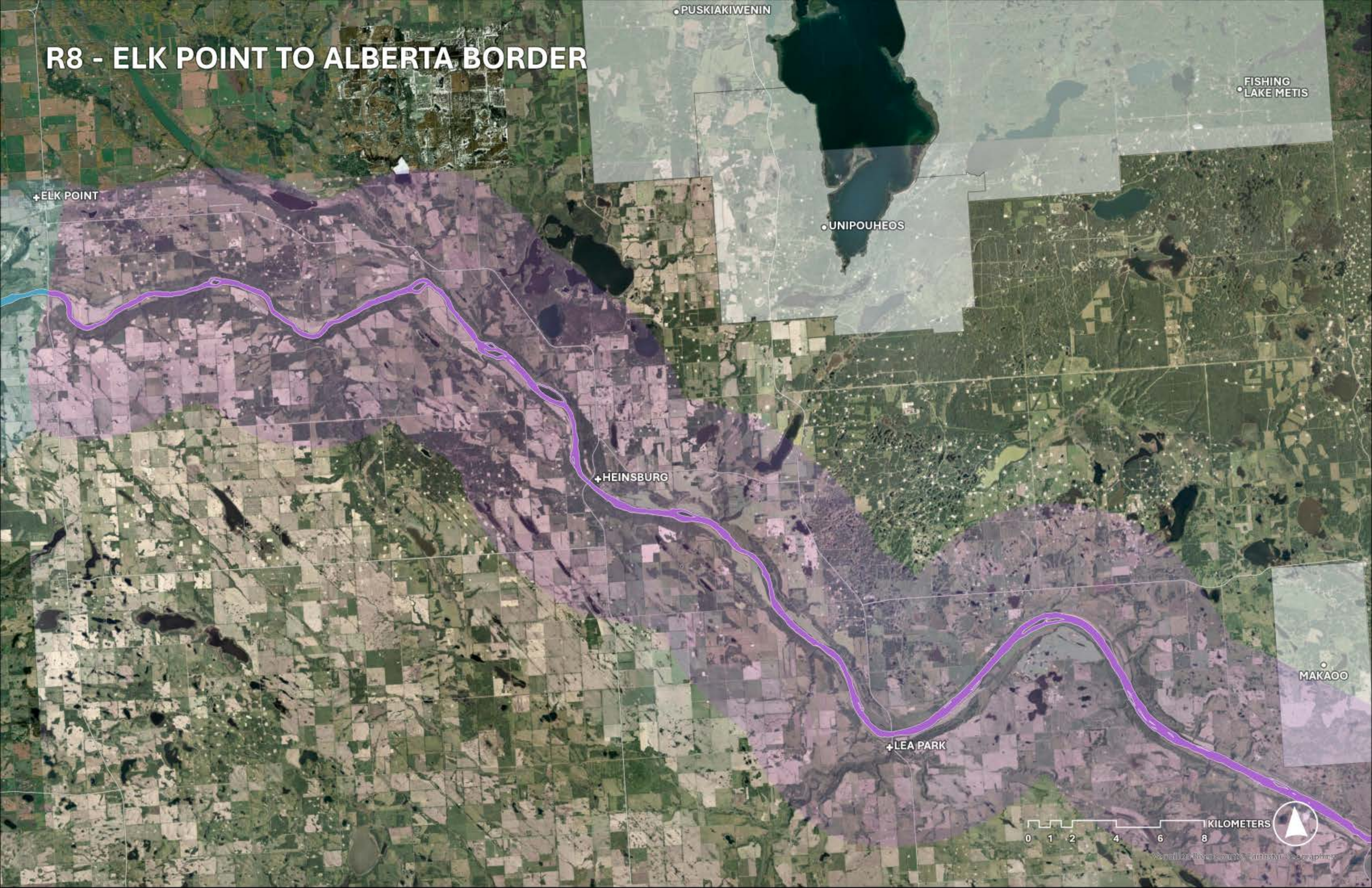
ELK POINT

BROSSEAU

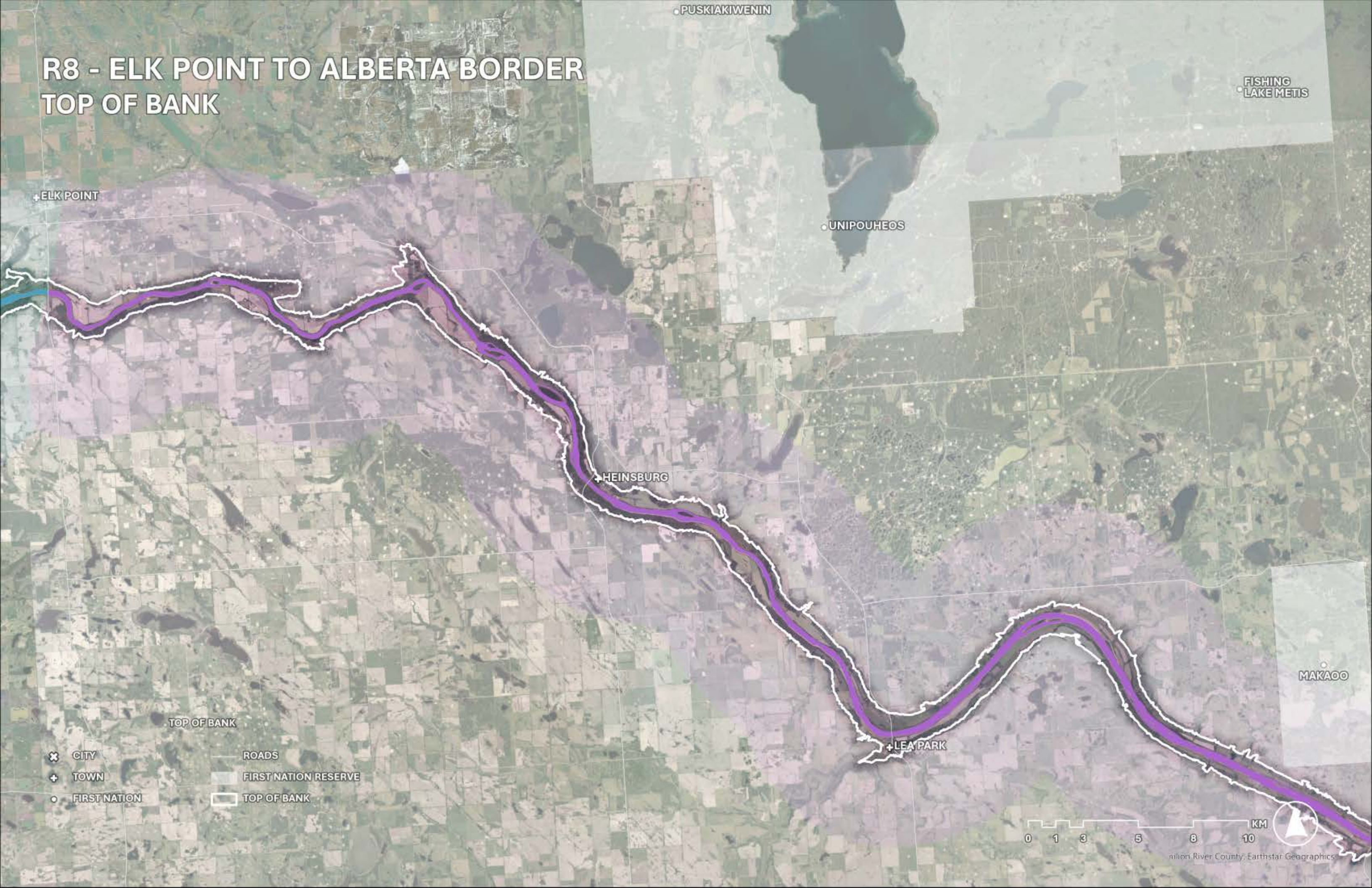
TWO HILLS



# R8 - ELK POINT TO ALBERTA BORDER



# R8 - ELK POINT TO ALBERTA BORDER TOP OF BANK



ELK POINT

PUSKIAKIWENIN

FISHING LAKE METIS

UNIPOUHEOS

HEINSBURG

LEA PARK

MAKAOO

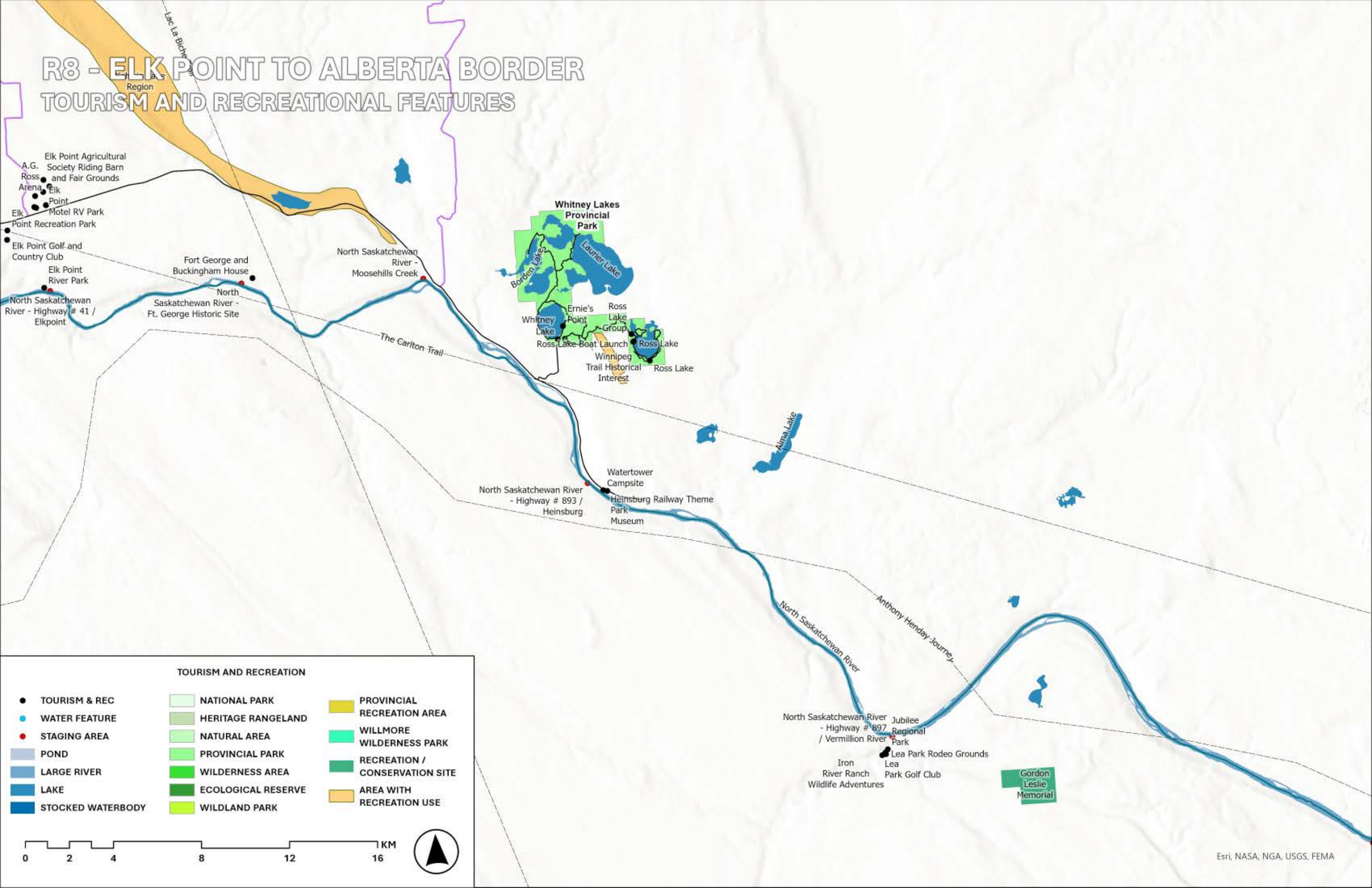
TOP OF BANK

- ✕ CITY
- + TOWN
- FIRST NATION
- ROADS
- FIRST NATION RESERVE
- TOP OF BANK



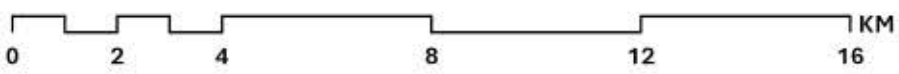
# R8 - ELK POINT TO ALBERTA BORDER

## TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL FEATURES

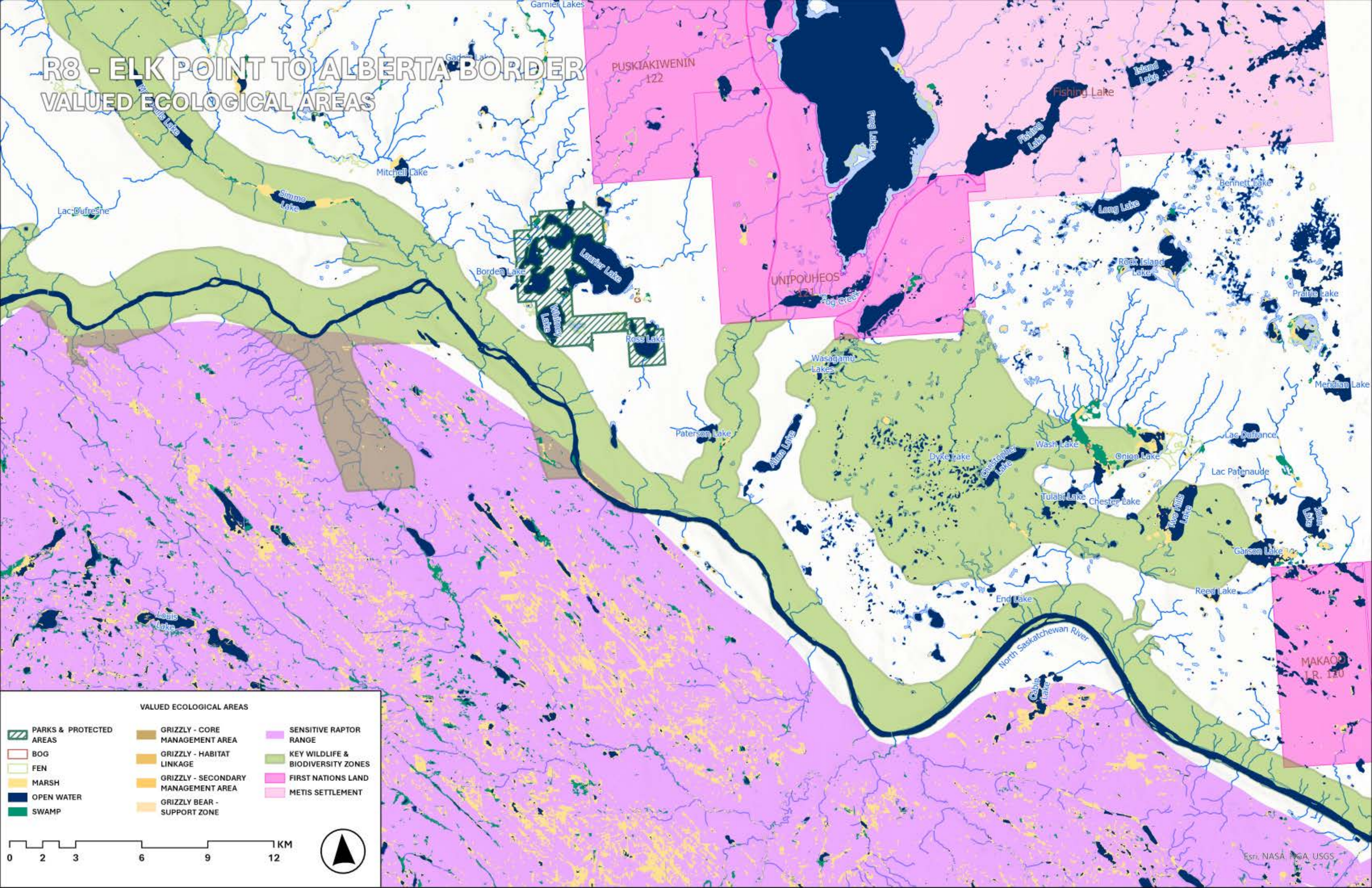


### TOURISM AND RECREATION

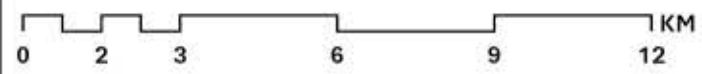
- TOURISM & REC
- WATER FEATURE
- STAGING AREA
- POND
- LARGE RIVER
- LAKE
- STOCKED WATERBODY
- NATIONAL PARK
- HERITAGE RANGELAND
- NATURAL AREA
- PROVINCIAL PARK
- WILDERNESS AREA
- ECOLOGICAL RESERVE
- WILDLAND PARK
- PROVINCIAL RECREATION AREA
- WILLMORE WILDERNESS PARK
- RECREATION / CONSERVATION SITE
- AREA WITH RECREATION USE



# R8 - ELK POINT TO ALBERTA BORDER VALUED ECOLOGICAL AREAS



- VALUED ECOLOGICAL AREAS**
- |                         |                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| PARKS & PROTECTED AREAS | GRIZZLY - CORE MANAGEMENT AREA      | SENSITIVE RAPTOR RANGE            |
| BOG                     | GRIZZLY - HABITAT LINKAGE           | KEY WILDLIFE & BIODIVERSITY ZONES |
| FEN                     | GRIZZLY - SECONDARY MANAGEMENT AREA | FIRST NATIONS LAND                |
| MARSH                   | GRIZZLY BEAR - SUPPORT ZONE         | METIS SETTLEMENT                  |
| OPEN WATER              |                                     |                                   |
| SWAMP                   |                                     |                                   |



# R8 - ELK POINT TO ALBERTA BORDER HISTORIC RESOURCE VALUES

+ ELK POINT

• PUSKIAKIWENIN

• FISHING LAKE METIS

• UNIPOUHEOS

+ HEINSBURG

• MAKAAO

+ LEA PARK

## HISTORIC RESOURCE VALUE

- |   |                      |   |
|---|----------------------|---|
| ✕ | CITY                 | 5 |
| + | TOWN                 | 4 |
| • | FIRST NATION         | 3 |
| — | ROADS                | 1 |
|   | FIRST NATION RESERVE |   |



Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, Imagery © Mapbox

## **Appendix B: Selected Statements/Letters of Support**





Mr. Kyle Schole  
Planning, Development and Project Assistant  
Smoky Lake County  
P.O. Box 310  
Smoky Lake AB T0A 3C0

2022-06-29

Dear Mr. Schole:

I am pleased to inform you that I have reviewed the recommendation from the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board with respect to the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River (Alberta) to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.

As the North Saskatchewan River (Alberta) meets selection and integrity guidelines, I have approved its nomination to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System for further consideration in order to conserve and celebrate Canada's rich river heritage.

As the driving force behind the multi-year project to nominate the North Saskatchewan River (Alberta) to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System, Smoky Lake County has every reason to be proud.

I commend you and your partners for your dedication to promoting public appreciation, conservation, and wise use of this important river, and I offer my congratulations to the extended team of volunteers and community partners who have played such a key role in this accomplishment.

I wish to thank you personally for your leadership and passion for sharing the story of the river and its significance with all Canadians.

I look forward to seeing progress by Smoky Lake County on a designation document that further builds a shared vision and strategic direction for management of the river.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steven Guilbeault".

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P. (il/lui/he/him)



107863

ALBERTA  
ENVIRONMENT AND PARKS

OCT 23 2020

*Office of the Minister  
Government House Leader  
MLA, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre*

Reeve Craig Lukinuk  
Smoky Lake County  
PO Box 310  
4612 McDougall Driver  
Smoky Lake AB T0A 3C0  
[craiglukinuk@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:craiglukinuk@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)

Dear Reeve Lukinuk:

Thank you for your letter regarding the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.

Alberta Environment and Parks supports your group's effort to nominate this river and, as the jurisdictional representative, we will make the formal nomination on your behalf. A heritage river designation would reflect the care and stewardship that local governments and stakeholders have undertaken along the river corridor, and help local municipalities and businesses promote the natural beauty, rich cultural history, and myriad recreation and tourism opportunities in your region.

Once the nomination is endorsed by the Canadian Heritage Rivers System Board of Directors, the next step is for Smoky Lake County to prepare a nomination document with relevant information and background studies. The Canadian Heritage Rivers System is a grassroots, locally driven program in Alberta. Alberta Environment and Parks will support your efforts where possible, and share available data about natural, cultural and recreation/tourism values pertinent to the river.

I applaud your efforts in pursuing this nomination, and for assembling substantial local and regional support in this regard.

Sincerely,

Jason Nixon  
Minister

cc: Tracy Draper, Alberta Environment and Parks  
Brian Joubert, Alberta Environment and Parks



ALBERTA

CULTURE, MULTICULTURALISM AND STATUS OF WOMEN

*Office of the Minister*

January 29, 2021

Mr. Kyle Schole  
Planning, Development, and Heritage Assistant  
Smoky Lake County  
4612 McDougall Drive  
PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake AB T0A 3C0

Dear Mr. Schole:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your application to have the North Saskatchewan River designated as a Canadian Heritage River.

The North Saskatchewan River, Rivière Saskatchewan Nord, *kisiskâciwani-sîpiy, omaka-ty*, is one of the great rivers of western Canada. From time immemorial, the river has been an essential conduit for economic and cultural exchanges among Canada's Indigenous peoples. In the post-contact period, the river remained a central travel route for Indigenous people, while also accommodating an increasing number of European explorers, traders, and settlers. Until supplanted by the transcontinental railroads in the late-1800s, the North Saskatchewan River was the primary transportation corridor through north-central Alberta, and some of Alberta's major urban centres were established upon its banks.

The North Saskatchewan River continues to be of great social and natural significance. It affords recreational opportunities to the many domestic and international visitors who enjoy the river valley's parks and trail systems, and remains an essential water source for agricultural, industrial, and municipal users.

Sincerely,

Leela Sharon Aheer  
Minister



Métis  
Nation of  
Alberta

## Office of the Provincial President

100 Delia Gray Building  
11738 Kingsway Avenue  
Edmonton AB T5G 0X5

Phone: 780 455 2200  
Fax: 780 452 8946  
www.albertametis.com

December 20, 2019

Kyle Schole  
Planning, Development & Heritage Assistant, Smoky Lake County  
4612 McDougall Drive  
P.O. Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0  
Email: [kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)

To Whom It May Concern:

**Re: Letter of Support for Inter-Provincial Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS) from the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA)**

Smoky Lake Regional Community Economic Development Committee (RCDC) that extends into other river neighbors and community partners along the North Saskatchewan River Watershed for support on inter-provincial nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

Within the Smoky Lake Region, the River flows past the Victoria District National Historic Site, Victoria Settlement, the Former Fort White Earth (Edmonton House III), and Métis Crossing, a site of extreme cultural significance to the Métis homeland.

The Métis Nation of Alberta supports this nomination of the North Saskatchewan River as it is significant to Métis culture, other community partners and neighbors along the river. The nomination of both the Saskatchewan and North Saskatchewan Rivers will ensure the long-term management of these rivers and that this area, rich in cultural, natural and recreational value, are conserved and protected for the continuing benefits and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada. This nomination will also support the broader spirit of collaboration between our communities to continue to work together towards maintaining ecological integrity along this area, support river health and wellness, and promote local and regional economic growth.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Audrey Poitras  
President  
Métis Nation of Alberta

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dan Cardinal  
Vice President  
Métis Nation of Alberta



March 11, 2021

Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) Board  
Attention: Ashley Campbell, Director, Heritage Designations and Programs Branch  
Indigenous Affairs and Cultural Heritage Directorate  
Parks Canada Agency  
3rd Floor, 30 Victoria Street  
Gatineau, QC J8X 0B3

Email: [Ashley.campbell@canada.ca](mailto:Ashley.campbell@canada.ca)

Sent by: E-mail

**RE: Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta to the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

Tansi,

I am pleased to provide this letter on behalf of the Nations across Treaty No. 6 Territory, to express our enthusiasm in support of nominating and designating the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta to the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS), which would honor its exceptional natural, cultural, recreational and spiritual values.

The North Saskatchewan River, *kisiskâciwan-sîpiy*, ("it flows swiftly") holds substantial traditional significance, being a place of gathering, commerce, and ceremony from time immemorial. *The Great Binding Law* provides a framework to live in harmony with the land for generations to come. It tells us that if we look after the land, the land will look after us. It is also an extension of kindness to newcomers, including regulators and resource developers ensuring that no more polluting of this sacred river will be allowed.

Further, the spirit and intent of Treaty was expressed by Commissioner Alexander Morris at the entering into of Treaty No. 6 at Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt in 1876, when he stated, "*What we speak of and do now will last as long as the sun shines and the river runs, we are looking forward to our children's children, for we are old and have but few days to live.*"

The North Saskatchewan River has always been an integral part of our heritage since time immemorial and continues to be an integral part of our Treaty No. 6. At Fort Pitt when Commissioner Morris indicated "as long as yonder river flows" he was pointing to the North Saskatchewan River. Water is life to the Indigenous Peoples of Treaty No. 6 Territory, as a matter of fact our word for water literally means life; "Nipi" derived from "Niya" My "Pimatisiwin" Life. So much so that when Treaty No. 6 was entered into by our ancestors, the mountains where the headwaters of the rivers are were not even on the table for discussion, these they reserved for all future generations so that the clean/clear life-giving water would always be there for the continued good health and good medicine for all.

With its deceptively slow-moving surface and its ever-shifting features, with its permanence and its continual movement, the river is a suitable metaphor for Indigenous storytelling. Indeed,

traditional stories are the most ancient literature of this land, yet they continue to change and shift and to speak to the realities of people in the present day.

Today, the North Saskatchewan River continues to be of great importance. Designation under the CHRS would serve to encourage enduring respect and stewardship of this landscape and grow relations among river communities. These are values and aspirations we support.

Ay Hy



OKIMAW VERNON WATCHMAKER  
GRAND CHIEF, CONDEDERACY OF TREATY 6 FIRST NATIONS

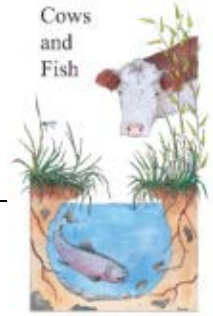
CC: Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change; [ec.ministre-minister.ec@canada.ca](mailto:ec.ministre-minister.ec@canada.ca)  
Hon. Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Canadian Heritage; [hon.steven.guilbeault@canada.ca](mailto:hon.steven.guilbeault@canada.ca)  
Amber Stewart, Integrated Land Use Planner, Jasper National Park; [Amber.Stewart@canada.ca](mailto:Amber.Stewart@canada.ca)  
Hon. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations; [carolyn.bennett@parl.gc.ca](mailto:carolyn.bennett@parl.gc.ca)  
Hon. Jason Nixon, Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks; [aep.minister@gov.ab.ca](mailto:aep.minister@gov.ab.ca)  
Hon. Leela Aheer, Alberta Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women;  
[cmsw.minister@gov.ab.ca](mailto:cmsw.minister@gov.ab.ca)  
Hon. Rick Wilson, Alberta Minister of Indigenous Relations, [ir.ministeroffice@gov.ab.ca](mailto:ir.ministeroffice@gov.ab.ca)  
Tracy Draper, Director, Land Management Branch, Alberta Environment and Parks,  
[Tracy.Draper@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Tracy.Draper@gov.ab.ca)  
Brian Joubert, Senior Parks Planner, Alberta Environment and Parks, [Brian.Joubert@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Brian.Joubert@gov.ab.ca)  
Smoky Lake County Council, c/o Kyle Schole, [kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)  
Edmonton City Council, c/o Kyle Witiw, [kyle.witiw@edmonton.ca](mailto:kyle.witiw@edmonton.ca)  
Edmonton Historical Board, c/o Dan Ross, [dan.rose.yeg@gmail.com](mailto:dan.rose.yeg@gmail.com)

# Cows and Fish

Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Avail Building  
530 – 8<sup>th</sup> Street S  
Lethbridge, AB T1J 2J8

Telephone (403) 381-5538  
Email: [nambrose@cowsandfish.org](mailto:nambrose@cowsandfish.org)  
[www.cowsandfish.org](http://www.cowsandfish.org)



November 17, 2020

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, P.O. Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB  
T0A 3C0

Via email to: Kyle Schole <[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>

RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River, Canadian Heritage River System designation.

To Whom it May Concern,

The Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society (Cows and Fish) is pleased to provide this letter supporting the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS), following up from the Oct 23, 2020 letter from the Alberta Minister of the Environment and Parks, Jason Nixon.

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-drive program, which is consistent with our mandate to encourage and promote community led initiatives, including to take local ownership of stewardship efforts for our water, riparian areas and watersheds. The focus of the CHRS to work cooperatively and ensure long-term management of rivers to conserve them for future generations is a goal we support.

Now more than ever, strategic, long-term efforts to support improved drinking water supplies, support natural infrastructure and healthy watersheds through thoughtful land use are important. Increasing land use pressures and population growth, coupled with highly variable climate and cumulative impacts of past land and water use decisions means we need to shine a light on our use and care of these places. As such we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognised watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Norine Ambrose'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Norine Ambrose, Executive Director  
Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society-“Cows and Fish”



Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

Sent by: Regular Mail

December 13, 2020

**RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River,  
Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

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To Whom it May Concern,

It is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada." - from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).*

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program, and represents an opportunity for river communities to share, promote, and celebrate the Natural, Cultural, and Recreational values of the river. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Best Regards,

Elisa Brosseau,  
Chair  
Alberta Bilingual Municipalities of Alberta  
p: (780) 573-9846

cc: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant , <[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>



Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

**Sent by: Electronic Mail**

December 16, 2020

**RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River,  
Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom it May Concern,

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of Lakeland Agricultural Research Association, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

*“The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada.” - from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).*

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development or agricultural restrictions along the river corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation. The program, however, serves to celebrate and promote the natural, cultural, and recreational values of the river, including agricultural uses.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Best Regards,

Kellie Nichiporik  
Environmental Program Manager  
Lakeland Agricultural Research Association  
e: [sustainag.lara@mcsnet.ca](mailto:sustainag.lara@mcsnet.ca) / p: (780) 812-1036

cc: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant , <[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>

Ceyana Canoe Club  
P.O. Box 4545  
Edmonton (South), AB  
T6E 5G4



December 18, 2020

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

Sent by: E-Mail

**RE: Letter of Support  
Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River, Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom it May Concern,

Rivers and Canoeing are large part of our Canadian Heritage. Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of the Ceyana Canoe Club, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

*“The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada.”*

**- North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).**

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program, and serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a greater portion, and if possible all of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System. This river has historically tied the three prairie provinces together and was the original gateway to western Canada. We paddlers feel that not having all or most of it within the CHRS is a great error.

We strongly support the nomination of a greater portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Best Regards,

Mark Lund  
President, Ceyana Canoe Club

cc: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant <[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

Sent by: EMail

December 22, 2020

**RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River,  
Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

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To Whom it May Concern,

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of N.E. Muni-Corr Ltd., it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). N.E. Muni-Corr Ltd. is a part nine not for profit company who own the 300km. long abandoned CN right of way in northeast Alberta. The organization is comprised of representatives from the ten municipalities the right of way traverses.

*“The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada.” - from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).*

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Best Regards,



Dwayne Yaremkevich,  
President  
North East Muni-Corr Ltd.

cc: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant , <[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

Sent by: EMail

December 22, 2020

**RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River,  
Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom it May Concern,

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of Riverland Recreational Trail Society, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). Riverland Recreational Trail Society is a non-profit organization made up of representatives from the regions five snowmobile clubs, horse and wagon club and other trail enthusiasts. The organization leases the middle 33 feet of the 300km. abandoned CN right of way and operates it as Alberta's Iron Horse Trail in partnership with the ten municipalities it passes through.

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada." - from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).*

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Best Regards,



Marvin Bjornstad

President  
Riverland Recreational Trail Society

cc: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant , <[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>



17507 Fort Road  
Edmonton, AB T5Y 6H3

Phone: 780-643-6732  
Fax: 780-422-6096

Reeve Craig Lukinuk  
Smoky Lake County  
PO Box 310  
4612 McDougall Drive  
Smoky Lake AB T0A 3C0  
craiglukinuk@smokylakecounty.ab.ca

December 23, 2020

**Regarding: Canadian Heritage River System North Saskatchewan River Nomination**

Mr. Reeve Lukinuk:

On behalf of the Agroforestry & Woodlot Extension Society (AWES), I would like to extend our support of the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River to the Canadian Heritage Rivers System. Thank you and the Smoky Lake County for bringing together this nomination and for extending the opportunity to AWES to support the Canadian Heritage Rivers System. A heritage river designation would reflect the care and stewardship that local governments, stakeholders, and landowners have taken along the river to promote the conservation, restoration and care of the North Saskatchewan River basin.

AWES understands the importance of encouraging landowners to develop practices and environments to improve and maintain freshwater resources. AWES is aware of the importance of the Canadian Heritage River Designation and is grateful for the efforts of all the organizations that have come forward to support this process.

For any questions please contact me at the numbers or email below.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive, which appears to read 'Megan Andre'.

**Megan Andre, P.Ag.**  
Executive Director  
Agroforestry & Woodlot Extension Society  
780-242-9855  
[m.andre@awes-ab.ca](mailto:m.andre@awes-ab.ca)  
[www.awes-ab.ca](http://www.awes-ab.ca)

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

Sent by: EMail

January 4, 2021

**RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River,  
Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom it May Concern,

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of Portage College, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

*“The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada.” - from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).*

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Sincerely,



Nancy Broadbent  
President & CEO

cc: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant , <[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>



January 27, 2021  
United Albertan Paddling Society  
PO Box 4930 South Edmonton  
Edmonton, AB T6E 5G8

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

Letter of Support:

Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS) Designation – Portion of the North Saskatchewan River

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Greetings:

The United Alberta Paddling Society (UAPS) would like to express its enthusiasm and support to Smoky Lake County regarding the designation of the North Saskatchewan River to the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

UAPS is a recreational whitewater kayaking club based out of Edmonton, Alberta. With strong instructional programming for both adults and youth, UAPS has been introducing paddlers to the excitement of whitewater since 1978. On-river activities such as canoe and kayaking are some of the best ways to experience the crown jewel of Edmonton that is the North Saskatchewan River. UAPS members enjoy refining their moving water skills on the North Saskatchewan River in Edmonton and beyond. The series of rapids near the Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site is a popular favourite among whitewater kayakers looking to spend some time surfing and cartwheeling.

As a member of the 2011 Cross Canada Canoe Odyssey I travelled along the North Saskatchewan River from its headwaters at Howse Pass all the way to Cedar Lake in Manitoba. Watching the characteristics of the River change from a braided turquoise stream to a meandering brown prairie river was a highlight of this journey. There was a great diversity of landscapes, wildlife, and cultural features that were distinct from other regions throughout Canada.

UAPS supports the objective to ensure the long-term management of this river in order that its unique values are celebrated and conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Kind regards,

*Nathalie Brunet*

Nathalie Brunet  
Special Director of Facilities  
On behalf of the UAPS Executive Committee  
n.n.brunet@gmail.com / 780-914-1332







## EDMONTON HISTORICAL BOARD

Prince of Wales Armouries  
10440 108 Avenue  
Edmonton Alberta T5H 3Z9

Daniel Rose CHAIR  
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James McTague  
David Ryning

February 25, 2021

His Worship Don Iveson and City Councillors,  
2nd Floor, City Hall  
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square  
Edmonton, AB T5J 2R7

Dear Mayor and City Council members,

**RE: Support for North Saskatchewan River Canadian Heritage Rivers System application**

On behalf of the Edmonton Historical Board, we are pleased to recommend our support for the application proposed by Smoky Lake County to recognize the North Saskatchewan River under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS). EHB is pleased to have been consulted on this exciting initiative and support this unique opportunity to celebrate the North Saskatchewan River.

For generations, the North Saskatchewan River has been a place of gathering, commerce, and ceremony. As a defining feature of the natural and cultural heritage of our city, the role of the North Saskatchewan River in shaping the course of growth of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region cannot be understated.

The Canadian Heritage Rivers System is a national program for recognizing, celebrating, and conserving the natural, cultural and recreational values of rivers across Canada. Established in 1984, the CHRS is a model of stewardship, cooperation, and participation among Canada's federal, provincial, and territorial governments. The CHRS works in conjunction with local communities and stewardship groups to give national recognition to Canada's outstanding rivers and encourages their long-term management to conserve their natural, cultural and recreational values for the benefit and enjoyment of Canadians, now and in the future.





**EDMONTON  
HISTORICAL  
BOARD**

**Prince of Wales Armouries**  
10440 108 Avenue  
Edmonton Alberta T5H 3Z9

Designation of the North Saskatchewan River under the CHRS is a fitting opportunity to promote our city's natural heritage and recognize the cultural value of the river to all Edmontonians. We encourage City Council to support this application.

Thank you,

Dan Rose  
Chair, Edmonton Historical Board

CC: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant, Smoky Lake County  
Martin Kennedy, Chair, Edmonton Heritage Council  
Tim O'Grady, President, Edmonton & District Historical Society



50230 Range Road 200  
Beaver County, AB  
T0B 4J2  
(780) 632-7699

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

**Sent by: Regular Mail**

DATE March 18, 2021

**RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River,  
Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

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To Whom It May Concern,

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf Go East of Edmonton Regional Tourism Organization, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

*“The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada.”* - **From the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).**

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As the driving force for tourism in the region, Go East of Edmonton Regional Tourism feels strongly about the value and importance of the North Saskatchewan River. The beauty and recreational opportunities are a vital part of our region for the health and quality of life for Canadians. It effects tourism which in turn has an economic impact on local businesses and communities. We are pleased to support this as well as be involved in any future opportunities that showcase the river and our region for its natural splendour. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Best Regards,



Jennifer Filip  
Chair  
(780) 632-7699

cc: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant, <[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>



SENATE | SÉNAT  
CANADA

THE HON./ L'HON  
PAULA SIMONS

SENATOR | ALBERTA  
SÉNATRICE | ALBERTA

Dear Members of the Heritage Rivers Board,

As an Independent Senator from Alberta, as a member of the Senate Standing Committee on Energy, the Environment, and Natural Resources, and as a born-and-bred Edmontonian, I'm writing to you in support of the application to have the North Saskatchewan River declared a national heritage river.

I grew up on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River valley. The river has helped to define my life. And it has helped to define my city and my province. I believe the river is a natural candidate for this designation. In the first place, it is an important environmental legacy. Because it has been relatively untouched by industrial development, or heavy transportation, it remains for much of its length a healthy riparian ecosystem. Clean-up efforts over the last decades have seen a return of many of the fish species that historically populate the river. The valley itself is an essential wildlife corridor that connects Banff National Park to the environs of Elk Island National Park. And of course the river is the source of fresh drinking water for many communities large and small all along its banks.

Secondly, it is a much-storied river with a rich multicultural heritage. The Cree called it *kisikâciwanisîpiy*, the swiftly flowing river. For the Blackfoot, it was *omaka-ty*, the big river. For centuries the river sustained the First Nations as a source of water and food and as a corridor that made trade connections. Later, it brought the fur traders west to Edmonton and carried their furs back to Hudson Bay for shipment to Europe. It was the river that brought French-Canadian voyageurs, labourers from the Orkney Islands, and even Alberta's first black resident (a Hudson's Bay Company navigator) who arrived via canoe in 1799. It was the river that helped to give birth to Alberta's Metis Nation, and this river carried the poetic Earl of Southesk west in 1859 to visit Fort Edmonton as the first celebrity tourist. It was the river that brought many of the first settlers to northern Alberta long before the railway arrived, whether they were from Lebanon or Ukraine or Norway. It was the riverside where people farmed or built their mines and brickyards. That history deserves to be recognized and celebrated, not just locally but as part of the Canadian story.



THE HON. / L'HON.  
PAULA SIMONS

Senator | Alberta  
Sénatrice | Alberta

Finally, I support this effort led by the County of Smoky Lake because it has gained the broad, almost universal support of communities and cultural institutions that line the river. The politicians and planners of Smoky Lake have achieved the near impossible – they have united Albertans all along the river in endorsing this initiative.

Today, the river is seeing a new kind of life as Albertans embrace its recreational potential, whether they are canoeing, tubing. Swimming, fishing, or letting their dogs frolic in the water. Declaring the river a national heritage resource could be a boon for all sorts of ecotourism initiatives.

In short, I hope you will give some serious consideration to accepting this application to name Alberta's full-length of the North Saskatchewan River one of Canada's remarkable heritage rivers.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Senator Paula Simons  
Senator, Alberta

THE HONOURABLE DOUG BLACK, Q.C.  
SENATOR - ALBERTA



L'HONORABLE DOUG BLACK, C.R.  
SÉNATEUR - ALBERTA

SENATE | SÉNAT  
CANADA

Friday, March 26, 2021

Smoky Lake County Council  
c/o Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant  
4612 McDougall Dr, Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB, T0A 3C0

Dear Reeve & County Council,

I am pleased to be writing in support of nominating and designating the North Saskatchewan River to the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS), which would honour its exceptional natural, cultural, and recreational values.

The North Saskatchewan River, *kisiskâciwani-sîpiy, omaka-ty*, (“it flows swiftly”) possesses enduring heritage significance and myriad recreational opportunities. The human history surrounding the river corridor is more than sufficient to warrant designation to the CHRS.

As an example, the Métis Crossing Cultural Gathering Centre within the Victoria District National Historic Site is a remarkable place of interpretation, learning, and reconciliation.

A journey along the North Saskatchewan is truly a Canadian ‘paddle into the past’. From coast to coast to coast, heritage rivers offer Canadians and visitors a chance to experience great waterways, learn about their rich history, and share in their stewardship. Designation of the North Saskatchewan River to the CHRS will encourage ongoing use, respect, and stewardship among river communities.

The beautiful North Saskatchewan is currently (and appropriately) designated in Banff National Park, and this cross-province designation is the next logical step.

I commend you on the momentum you have generated in support of the project. Congratulations on taking a leadership role in championing and spearheading this worthy initiative. I look forward to following your progress to successful designation of this important Canadian waterway!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Black".

Senator Doug Black, Q.C.

cc: Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
Hon. Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Canadian Heritage  
Hon. Jason Nixon, Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks  
Ashley Campbell, Director, Heritage Designations and Programs Branch, Indigenous Affairs and Cultural Heritage Directorate, Parks Canada Agency  
Amber Stewart, Integrated Land Use Planner, Jasper National Park  
Tracy Draper, Director, Land Management Branch, Alberta Environment and Parks  
Edmonton City Council, c/o Kyle Witiw  
Edmonton Historical Board, c/o Dan Rose



# North Battleford

City of North Battleford  
1291 - 101st Street  
P.O. Box 460

North Battleford  
Saskatchewan  
Canada S9A 2Y6

PH: (306) 445-1700  
FAX: (306) 445-0411

April 12, 2021

Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport  
Box 607, 1 – 101 Railway Place  
Meadow Lake, SK S9X 1Y5

Attention: Colette Schmalz, Senior Park Advisor

Dear Ms. Schmalz:

**Re: Interprovincial Nomination – North Saskatchewan River Heritage River Designation**

On behalf of Council and the City of North Battleford, I would like to express our sincere pleasure in supporting the interprovincial nomination of the North Saskatchewan River as a Canadian Heritage River. The City of North Battleford and the Town of Battleford (herein the Battlefords) comprise our immediate area and are located directly across from one another on the North Saskatchewan River which has instilled a deep sense of community connectedness within our region.

The River's history in the Battlefords pre-dates European settlement, where the ancestors of our surrounding Indigenous people lived, hunted, and raised their families. Following settlement, the Battlefords region contributed significantly to the fur trade, the telegraph and railway lines, immigration, and the development of Western Canada. The Town of Battleford was incorporated in 1907 and the City of North Battleford followed in 1913. The River signifies a deep cultural connection with our past and present while representing our rich cultural history and the evolution of our culturally diverse population leading up to the present day.

Today, the river is a natural feature of significance not only in our region but in Canada. It represents the cultural, natural, and recreational values that are important to our nation and significant in meeting the criteria for heritage designation.

In Closing, we believe the designation of the North Saskatchewan River as a heritage River will provide invaluable opportunities for Canadians to learn more about the River's cultural and natural values, the history of our indigenous peoples, the history of the Battlefords and the Rivers' role in the development of Western Canada.

<sup>1</sup> McPherson, A., 1966, A history of the Battlefords to 1914



# North Battleford

City of North Battleford  
1291 - 101st Street  
P.O. Box 460

North Battleford  
Saskatchewan  
Canada S9A 2Y6

PH: (306) 445-1700  
FAX: (306) 445-0411

Designation of the North Saskatchewan River can only serve to emphasize its meaningful history in the evolution of our nation, while also highlighting the natural, recreational and tourism related opportunities available along its banks. Council and the City of North Battleford support the North Saskatchewan River Basin Council in the designation process.

Should you have any questions or require clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me at [mayor@cityofnb.ca](mailto:mayor@cityofnb.ca) or at 306-441-1728.

Sincerely,

David Gillan,  
Mayor

<sup>1</sup> McPherson, A., 1966, A history of the Battlefords to 1914





2000 – 10423 101 Street, Edmonton, Alberta  
T5H 0E8 Canada  
[epcor.com](http://epcor.com)

April 28, 2021

Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) Board  
Attention: Ashley Campbell, Director, Heritage Designations and Programs Branch Indigenous Affairs  
and Cultural Heritage Directorate  
Parks Canada Agency  
3<sup>rd</sup> floor, 30 Victoria Street  
Gatineau, QC J8X 0B3  
Email: [Ashley.campbell@canada.ca](mailto:Ashley.campbell@canada.ca)

**Re: Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta to the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

I am pleased to provide this letter on behalf of EPCOR to express our support in nominating and designating the North Saskatchewan River (NSR) in Alberta to the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

The North Saskatchewan River is the sole source of drinking water for over one million people in the Edmonton region. As well the river assimilates treated wastewater from EPCOR's Gold Bar wastewater treatment plant and the stormwater collection system. As the utility who both provides drinking water and manages discharges of storm and wastewater to the NSR, EPCOR is committed to ensuring that the water quality and aquatic ecosystems of the NSR are maintained or improved over time as the City grows.

EPCOR recognizes that collaborative watershed management combined with watershed science, will ensure the NSR will continue to support healthy aquatic ecosystems and maintain the current good water quality and supply that we have come to depend on. As such, EPCOR contributes financially and in-kind to the established Watershed Planning and Advisory Council, the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA). EPCOR also sits on the NSWA's board and Headwaters Alliance group.

Understanding the importance of having a strong scientific foundation for decision making, EPCOR spearheaded the development of a tributary monitoring network for the North Saskatchewan River basin (the WaterSHED project) in 2018 which supports monitoring of 19 tributaries in the NSR watershed. This program was developed and carried out in partnership with the NSWA, City of Edmonton and Alberta Environment & Parks' Monitoring Evaluation and Science Division. To build on this monitoring work, EPCOR is currently leading the development of a ten year basin-wide modelling strategy and tool to look at future growth, climate change, and management scenarios as they effect water quality and quantity. EPCOR also funds University-based research projects to better understand groundwater contributions, climate change impacts and impacts of agricultural beneficial management practices on the NSR.

In the urban watershed, EPCOR has developed an Integrated Watershed Management Strategy to quantify and manage total loads to the NSR from the City of Edmonton's footprint. A highlight of this strategy is the implementation of Low Impact Development (LID) features across the City to reduce urban flooding and runoff to the NSR.

The North Saskatchewan River is integral to the histories of Indigenous people and settlers alike, and the Edmonton reach marks an important gathering place in both pre-contact and post-contact times. The North Saskatchewan River valley at Edmonton has been occupied for at least eight to ten thousand years.

EPCOR has funded archaeological investigations in the River Crossing (Rossdale) area of Edmonton, and at our E.L. Smith Water Treatment Plant in west Edmonton, which have added to the understanding of the significance of human occupation along the river.

At River Crossing/Rossdale, EPCOR's utility services stand adjacent to and overlapping with the footprints of several earlier versions of Fort Edmonton (which occupied five locations on the North Saskatchewan River between 1795 and 1915). Several of our buildings there are provincially designated heritage buildings, as is our former power generating plant which was recently transferred to the City of Edmonton for future adaptive reuse.

Rossdale was a burying ground for Indigenous people and others who lived at Fort Edmonton and in the surrounding area. When human remains were found on the site, a commitment was made to honour those buried there. Part of Rossdale Road that crossed the burial ground was rerouted around it and the decision was made to build a memorial. The human remains were reburied at a special ceremony in August of 2006 and the site is now legally designated as a cemetery or burial ground. The memorial was designed with input from the City of Edmonton, EPCOR, descendants, stakeholders and community volunteers, including people of First Nations, French Canadian, Métis and European ancestry.

At our E.L. Smith Water Treatment Plant in west Edmonton, archeological investigations have identified seven campsite occupations that ranged between roughly 3,500 and 9,000 years before present. We will be promoting public understanding of this history through upcoming interpretive installations, and have entered into a partnership with Enoch Cree Nation to facilitate the reintroduction of ceremony and cultural practices to this area, which includes their former reserve lands. At both sites, we have protocols with 30 Indigenous Nations and representative groups that includes a process for their participation in monitoring ground disturbance activities.

As an organization that is closely connected to the North Saskatchewan River, and that has invested significantly in advancing management, research, monitoring, modelling, implementation and education for over 30 years, EPCOR welcomes and supports the designation of the NSR as a Canadian Heritage River. Specifically EPCOR supports the CHRS's building opportunities for cooperative river management that unites communities; the celebration and support of the cultural connections of Indigenous Peoples with rivers; the promotion of stewardship and citizen engagement; the engagement of new Canadians and youth in river education, conservation, and recreation; and the encouragement of the protection of water resources to improve public health, well-being and quality of life.

Yours truly,



Shawn Bradford  
Senior Vice President Water Canada  
EPCOR Utilities Inc.

cc. Martin Kennedy, Director, Public & Government Affairs



4638 - 90A Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T6B 2P9

To: Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

**MUNICIPAL  
SHAREHOLDERS**

**Sent by: Email**

May 28, 2021



**RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River,  
Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom it May Concern,

Further to the letter of support from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and subsequent support from our six municipal shareholders, it is a pleasure to provide this letter on behalf of the River Valley Alliance Board of Directors, supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada." - from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).*

We understand and appreciate that the CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program and designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase development restrictions along the river corridor. However, the program serves to celebrate and

promote the natural, cultural, and recreational values of the river, a designation that the North Saskatchewan River is certainly worthy of.

The River Valley Alliance serves to co-ordinate, preserve, protect, and enhance one of the largest metropolitan river valley park systems in the world – a legacy for generations to come – by connecting 100 kms of trail system and making it easier for all to access and enjoy regardless of age or ability. As such we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Best Regards,



Katherine O'Neill  
Chair, Board of Directors  
River Valley Alliance



Kristine Archibald  
Executive Director  
River Valley Alliance

cc: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant , <[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>



202, 9440 49 Street, Edmonton, AB T6B 2M9 | [NSWA.AB.CA](http://NSWA.AB.CA)

May 19, 2021

County of Smoky Lake Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, P.O. Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB  
T0A 3C0

**RE: Letter of Support for Canadian Heritage Designation for the North Saskatchewan River**

The North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) is pleased to provide this letter supporting the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS) by the County of Smoky Lake.

With the County of Smoky Lake being committed to identifying and preserving its vast and rich local historic and heritage assets through municipal policies, bylaws, and its participation on the Smoky Lake Heritage Regional Heritage Board, the County is uniquely qualified to lead the designation of the NSR for its cultural values.

The NSWA applauds the County of Smoky Lake for its efforts in securing support from both provincial and municipal governments and preparing the application and subsequent management plan required for the CHR designation. NSWA would be happy to provide the County with our original CHR reports and background information in support of your endeavors.

Sincerely,

Ken Crutchfield, Chair  
North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance

cc Leah Kongsrude, Executive Director NSWA

---



03 June 2021

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

RE: Letter of support to designate the North Saskatchewan River within the Canadian Heritage River System

To Whom It May Concern,

As a leading cultural institution in Alberta, and Canada's largest open air museum, Fort Edmonton Park is a driver within the tourism industry because of its clear cultural relevance to Canada. It is uniquely positioned in the Edmonton River Valley and its history is directly associated with the fur trade. All of its historic locations have had a critical reliance on the North Saskatchewan River.

There are few waterways that have such significance to the emergence of culturally relevant spaces, and the banks of the North Saskatchewan River stands as the very reason Fort Edmonton exists today.

Designation within the CHRS will bolster the historic relevance of Fort Edmonton Park, and the new Indigenous Peoples Experience, which was created in partnership with the Métis Nation of Alberta, and the Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations. It is a world class new exhibit with a river running through it; the North Saskatchewan River.

I am pleased to submit my strong support in recommending the North Saskatchewan River be considered for inclusion in the Canadian Heritage River System. Thank you for considering this endorsement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darren Dagleish".

Darren Dagleish  
President and CEO, Fort Edmonton Management Company

Cc. Cameron John, Chair of the Board

Dec. 9, 2019

North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (SK)  
Box 458  
Hafford, SK, S0J 1A0



**RE: Letter of Support for Inter-Provincial Nomination of the  
North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom It May Concern,

Further to the letter submitted by Smoky Lake County Council, dated October 30, 2019, I am pleased to provide this letter of support on behalf of Paddle Alberta Society toward an inter-provincial nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). Further to the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance *Heritage River Background Study* (2005):

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture between federal, provincial, and territorial governments designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada."*

We agree that the River should be nominated on an inter-provincial basis under this program. Indeed, the entire reach of the Saskatchewan and North Saskatchewan Rivers are rich in cultural, natural, and recreation value. Our communities are greatly enhanced by the health and legacy of the River, which deserves to be both protected and celebrated.

Again, we support the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion into the Canadian Heritage River System, and we are hopeful that other community partners and river neighbors will lend their support as well.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Karla Handy".

Karla Handy, Program Services Coordinator  
Paddle Alberta Society

cc: North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance  
Smoky Lake County.



**PADDLE CANADA**  
**PAGAIE CANADA**

PO Box 126 Station Main  
Kingston ON CANADA K7L 4V6  
Toll-free: 1-888-252-6292  
info@paddlingcanada.com  
www.paddlingcanada.com



December <sup>10</sup>12, 2019

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (AB)  
202-9440 49 Street  
Edmonton, AB T6B 2M9

North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (SK)  
Box 458  
Hafford, SK, S0J 1A0

**RE: Letter of Support for Inter-Provincial Nomination of the  
North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

To Whom It May Concern,

Further to the letter submitted by Smoky Lake County Council, dated October 30, 2019, I am pleased to provide this letter of support on behalf of Paddle Canada toward an inter-provincial nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). Further to the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance *Heritage River Background Study* (2005):

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture between federal, provincial, and territorial governments designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada."*

We agree that the River should be nominated on an inter-provincial basis under this program. Indeed, the entire reach of the Saskatchewan and North Saskatchewan Rivers are rich in cultural, natural, and recreation value. Our communities are greatly enhanced by the health and legacy of the River, which deserves to be both protected and celebrated.

Again, we support the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion into the Canadian Heritage River System, and we are hopeful that other community partners and river neighbors will lend their support as well.

Best Regards,

Michelle McShane  
Executive Director  
Paddle Canada

cc: Smoky Lake County.





**Travel Alberta**  
400-1601 9 Avenue SE  
Calgary, Alberta  
Canada T2G 0H4

☎ 403-648-1000  
☎ 403-648-1111  
🌐 travelalberta.com  
🌐 industry.travelalberta.com

January 24, 2020

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (AB)  
202-9440 49 Street  
Edmonton, AB T6B 2M9

North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (SK)  
Box 458  
Hafford, SK S0J 1A0

**RE: Letter of Support for Inter-Provincial Nomination of the  
North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom It May Concern,

Further to the letter submitted by Smoky Lake County Council, dated October 30, 2019, I am pleased to provide this letter of support on behalf of Travel Alberta toward an inter-provincial nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). Further to the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance *Heritage River Background Study* (2005):

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture between federal, provincial, and territorial governments designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada."*

We agree that the River should be nominated on an inter-provincial basis under this program. Indeed, the entire reach of the Saskatchewan and North Saskatchewan Rivers are rich in cultural, natural, and recreation value. Our communities are greatly enhanced by the health and legacy of the River, which deserves to be both protected and celebrated.

Again, we support the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion into the Canadian Heritage River System, and we are hopeful that other community partners and river neighbors will lend their support as well.

Best Regards,

Royce Chwin  
CEO

cc: Smoky Lake County

# EXPLORE EDMONTON

January 25, 2021

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

**RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to provide this letter of support on behalf of Explore Edmonton, toward the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). From the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005):

*“The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada.”*

The North Saskatchewan River, which runs through Edmonton, is our city’s primary natural asset, a special gathering place for our indigenous peoples, generations before first contact and a major attraction for residents and visitors alike. In our efforts to attract national and international visitors to Edmonton, we promote the River Valley as a haven for outdoor adventure, rich in cultural, natural, and recreational value. Our region greatly benefits from the River’s offerings, and I wholeheartedly support shining a new spotlight on the River through this nomination for the Canadian Heritage River System.

I hope you will look favorably upon this nomination. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further help.

Yours sincerely,



Maggie Davison

Interim CEO  
780.700.9351 | [mdavison@exploreedmonton.com](mailto:mdavison@exploreedmonton.com)

February 3, 2020

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (AB)  
202-9440 49 St NW  
Edmonton, AB T6B 2M9

2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR, 10440 – 108 AVENUE  
PRINCE OF WALES ARMOURIES HERITAGE CENTRE  
EDMONTON, ALBERTA T5H 3Z9

PHONE: 780.429.0166  
WWW.EDMONTONHERITAGE.CA

North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (SK)  
Box 458  
Hafford, SK, S0J 1A0

**Re: Letter of Support for Inter-Provincial Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

To Whom It May Concern,

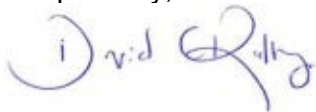
I am pleased to provide this letter of general support for an inter-provincial nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

As an organization, Edmonton Heritage Council's essential work is to connect people to the stories of our city through our leadership, support, and programs. We do this by helping Edmontonians research, preserve, interpret, and advocate for our heritage. Edmonton was forged by the North Saskatchewan River, and it is an essential part of the city's heritage.

This is also the case for many other areas along the North Saskatchewan Rivers in Alberta and Saskatchewan. These communities would not exist as we know them without the legacy of the river. The cultural, natural, and recreation value of the North Saskatchewan is essential to life and culture in the prairie provinces. The Edmonton Heritage Council greatly appreciates efforts in seeking designation under this program to give this river the protection and celebration it so richly deserves.

Again, we support the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion into the Canadian Heritage River System, and we are hopeful that other community partners and river neighbors will lend their support as well.

Respectfully,



David Ridley  
Executive Director  
Edmonton Heritage Council  
[dridley@edmontonheritage.ca](mailto:dridley@edmontonheritage.ca)  
tel: 780 429-0166 ext. 232

CC: Kyle Schole, Smoky Lake County

February 7, 2020

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (AB)  
202-9440 49 Street  
Edmonton, AB T6B 2M9

North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (SK)  
Box 458  
Hafford, SK, S0J 1A0



**RE: Letter of Support for Inter-Provincial Nomination of the  
North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom It May Concern,

Further to the letter submitted by Smoky Lake County Council, dated October 30, 2019, I am pleased to provide this letter of support on behalf of the Edmonton and District Historical Society toward an inter-provincial nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). Further to the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance *Heritage River Background Study* (2005):

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture between federal, provincial, and territorial governments designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada."*

We agree that the River should be nominated on an inter-provincial basis under this program. Indeed, the entire reach of the Saskatchewan and North Saskatchewan Rivers are rich in cultural, natural, recreation, and historical value. Our communities are greatly enhanced by the health and legacy of the River, which deserves to be both protected and celebrated.

Again, we support the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion into the Canadian Heritage River System, and we are hopeful that other community partners and river neighbors will lend their support as well.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim O'Grady", written over a horizontal line.

Tim O'Grady  
President, Edmonton and District Historical Society

cc: Smoky Lake County

Letter of Support  
Inter-Provincial Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River  
Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)

## Kyle Schole

---

**From:** Raquel Feroe [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** April 16, 2021 9:42 AM  
**To:** council@edmonton.ca  
**Cc:** Kristine Kowalchuk; Kyle Schole  
**Subject:** Re April 19th 8.2 (Our support for heritage river designation.)

Dear Councillors,

re [April 19th](#) Agenda item 8.2 Initiative to Designate the North Saskatchewan River a Heritage River (M. Walters) Designation

### Endorsement letter from ERVCC.

The Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition (ERVCC) understands there will be a motion made [on April 19](#) that the Mayor, on behalf of City Council, write a letter to the Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks supporting the initiative being led by Smoky Lake County in collaboration with other river municipalities and Indigenous groups, to nominate 818km of the North Saskatchewan River across Alberta as a Heritage River under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS). This designation is Canada's nationally recognized program conserving and celebrating the natural, cultural, and recreational values of exceptional Canadian Rivers.

The ERVCC has attended two webinars on this subject and read through the original report prepared by Billie Milholland of the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance, as well as spoken with Kyle Schole, planner and Heritage Assistant for Smokey Lake. As we see it, the designation will serve as vehicle for collaboration and conversation among governments, residents, and landowners. We feel by celebrating and telling the stories of our collective heritage and culture we can further learn for the river and honour the river. Designation will help the river tell its most important stories. The ERVCC **endorses the designation.**

Thank you,  
Rocky Feroe on behalf of Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition (ERVCC)



## TOWN OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

---

P O BOX 1509 5116 50 AVENUE ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE AB T4T 1B2

June 17, 2020

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (AB)  
202-9440 49 Street  
Edmonton, AB T6B 2M9

North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (SK)  
Box 458  
Hafford, SK, S0J 1A0

**RE: Letter of Support for Inter-Provincial Nomination of the  
North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom It May Concern,

Further to the letter submitted by Smoky Lake County Council, dated October 30, 2019, I am pleased to provide this letter of support on behalf of the Town of Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, toward an inter-provincial nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). Further to the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance *Heritage River Background Study* (2005):

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture between federal, provincial, and territorial governments designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada."*

We agree that the River should be nominated on an inter-provincial basis under this program. Indeed, the entire reach of the North Saskatchewan River is rich in cultural, natural, and recreation value. Our communities are greatly enhanced by the health and legacy of the River, which deserves to be both protected and celebrated.

Again, we support the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion into the Canadian Heritage River System, and we are hopeful that other community partners and river neighbors will lend their support as well.

Best Regards,

Mayor Tammy Burke

cc: Smoky Lake County (kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)  
Town Council  
CAO





January 26, 2021

Reeve Craig Lukinuk  
Smoky Lake County  
PO Box 310  
4612 McDougall Drive  
Smoky Lake AB T0A 3C0  
[craiglukinuk@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:craiglukinuk@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)

Dear Reeve Lukinuk:

On behalf of Clearwater County, I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) designation.

The North Saskatchewan River majestically flows by many campsites, recreation areas and culturally significant locations within Clearwater County. Our communities are greatly enhanced by this River's legacy which deserves to be celebrated and recognized for its unique Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values.

With a CHRS designation, this beautiful scenic river, rich in history and adventure, will be conserved for the enjoyment of residents and Canadian and international tourists, now and forever. Initiatives such as this encourage and support Clearwater County's high regard for environmental stewardship practices that value and protect the natural environment for future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this initiative and Council looks forward to hearing of a successful outcome of the nomination.

Sincerely,

  
Cammie Laird  
Reeve



# County of Wetaskiwin No. 10

P.O. Box 6960, Wetaskiwin, AB T9A 2G5

Phone: 780-352-3321

Fax: 780-352-3486

[www.county.wetaskiwin.ab.ca](http://www.county.wetaskiwin.ab.ca)

---

**Strong Proactive Leadership • Safe Progressive Communities**

---

January 7, 2021

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River  
Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)

---

To Whom it May Concern,

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of the County of Wetaskiwin No. 10, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada." - from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).*

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Best Regards,

  
Rod Hawken  
CAO

e: [rhawken@county10.ca](mailto:rhawken@county10.ca) / p: (780) 361-6225

cc: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant,  
[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)



November 19, 2020

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

To Whom It May Concern:

**Subject: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River, Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---


Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of Parkland County, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ... designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada."* -from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Regards,



Laura Swain, MPA  
Interim Chief Administrative Officer

Copy: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant  
kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca



101-1101 5 St., Nisku, AB T9E 2X3  
phone: 780-955-3555 fax: 780-955-8866  
leduc-county.com

*County Manager's Office*

May 13, 2021



*Our file number: 0440-R05*

Smoky Lake County  
PO Box 310  
4612 McDougall Driver  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

Attention: Reeve Craig Lukinuk

**North Saskatchewan Heritage River**

Leduc County council, at their May 11, 2021 regular meeting, resolved to provide a letter of support to Smoky Lake County in preparation of the nomination for a portion of the North Saskatchewan River under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.

Yours truly,



Duane Coleman, CLGM  
County Manager



## 9.4 Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS) Designation

Tony Kulbisky, Chief Administrative Officer			
<b>060/2021</b> Carried	<b>Moved By</b> Councillor Hugh	<b>In Favour</b> Mayor Ralph Councillor Adams Councillor Hugh Councillor Koroll	<b>Opposed</b> None opposed.
That Council directs Administration to draft letter of support under the Mayor's signature to Smoky Lake County regarding the Town of Devon's support for the possible designation of the North Saskatchewan River to the Canadian Heritage River System as recommended.			



MAYOR DON IVESON  
CITY OF EDMONTON

2nd FLOOR, CITY HALL  
1 SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SQUARE  
EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA T5J 2R7  
PHONE: 780-496-8100  
don.iveson@edmonton.ca

August 16, 2021

The Honourable Jason Nixon  
Minister of Environment and Parks  
323 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6



Dear Minister Nixon:

On behalf of Edmonton City Council, and further to an April 19, 2021, unanimous Council motion, I am pleased to share with you the City of Edmonton's conditional support for the nomination to the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS) of the 818 kilometre stretch of the North Saskatchewan River that flows across Alberta.

The City supports the recognition of the North Saskatchewan River as part of Canada's outstanding river systems, which will enhance its significant heritage values for the long-term benefit and enjoyment of Canadians. However, as the structure, funding and action of the management board that would be associated with the CHRS designation have not yet been determined, the City is not able to comment on its support of that element at this time. The City of Edmonton looks forward to reviewing further details and plans related to the designation of the North Saskatchewan as a Heritage River. In particular, we look to understand the role that the City might play and how this cooperative venture can advance the shared interests of municipalities, Indigenous Peoples and other stakeholders in the North Saskatchewan River area.

The benefits and opportunities of the designation appear to be compatible with the plans and aspirations of the city, the region and the province. From an Edmonton perspective, I note in particular the work that the City of Edmonton has done in celebrating and protecting this unique water body, including The City Plan, and the initiation of projects such as Touch the Water Promenade and the River Valley Planning Modernization. I echo the comments of several other supporters on the benefits of this voluntary, community-driven program that will advance awareness and protection without increasing rules and restrictions along the river corridor.

The North Saskatchewan River runs through the heart of Edmonton and has been an important place of gathering, commerce and ceremony for Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. To this end, the City of Edmonton was pleased to see support for this designation from both the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations and the Métis Nation of Alberta.

The river has been vital in the development of the city, and will be an essential part of its future. We look forward to seeing how the CHRS designation can support the recognition and protection of this essential feature of Edmonton and the region.

Your truly,



Don Iveson  
Mayor

c: Mr. Andre Corbould, City Manager, City of Edmonton  
Mr. ~~Dan Rose~~, Chair, Edmonton Historical Board *Dominic Schamuhn.*  
Mr. Stuart Lee, President and CEO, EPCOR Utilities Inc.

*Smoky Lake County Council*

CITY  
of  
**FORT SASKATCHEWAN**



Gale Katchur  
Mayor

10005 - 102 STREET  
FORT SASKATCHEWAN, ALBERTA  
CANADA T8L 2C5  
TEL 780.992.6220  
FAX 780.998.4774  
gkatchur@fortsask.ca  
www.fortsask.ca

January 13, 2021

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

Sent by: Regular Mail

RE: **Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River,  
Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom it May Concern,

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of the City of Fort Saskatchewan, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

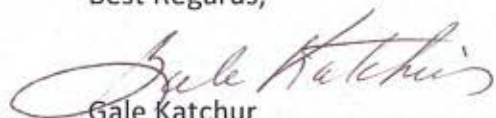
*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada." - from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).*

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations.

As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gale Katchur".

Gale Katchur

Mayor, City of Fort Saskatchewan

cc: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant, <[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>

April 19, 2021



**Mr. Craig Lukinuk, Reeve**  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

Dear Reeve Lukinuk,

**Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River, Canadian Heritage  
River System**

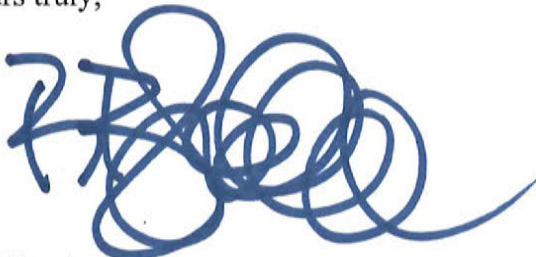
Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from the Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks, Jason Nixon, it is a pleasure to provide this letter of support on behalf of Strathcona County for the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River to the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

Strathcona County supports this nomination to recognize the North Saskatchewan River as an important ecological and recreational corridor, and believes that this nomination to the CHRS will help ensure a long-term commitment to conservation.

Strathcona County understands that the CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program, and that designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, nor does it create new rules or restrictions because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, Strathcona County supports the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Yours truly,



Rod Frank, JD  
Mayor  
Strathcona County

cc: Kyle Schole, Smoky Lake County, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant,  
<kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca>



February 6, 2021

Delivered via Email: [clukinuk@smokylake.ca](mailto:clukinuk@smokylake.ca)

Reeve Craig Lukinuk, Smoky Lake County  
Smoky Lake County  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

Dear Reeve Lukinuk,

**RE: Letter of Support for North Saskatchewan River CHRS Nomination**

Recently Mr. Jordan Ruegg, Smoky Lake's Planning & Development Manager, presented to Sturgeon County Council on your community's aspiration for the North Saskatchewan River to be designated as part of the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

Sturgeon County deeply values local heritage and our role as stewards of our natural environment. We agree that the North Saskatchewan has a rich cultural, natural and recreational value and should be championed as an outstanding river. I am therefore pleased, on behalf of Sturgeon County, to provide this letter of support for Smoky Lake's endeavour to nominate the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion within the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

We look forward to the various informational reports you may develop, and to news of a successful designation.

Sincerely,

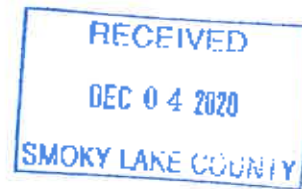


Mayor Alanna Hnatiw  
Sturgeon County

cc: Council, Sturgeon County  
Reegan McCullough, CAO Sturgeon County



Box 10, Thorhild, AB T0A 3J0  
Ph: 780-398-3741  
Fax: 780-398-3748  
Toll Free: 1-877-398-3777  
www.thorhildcounty.com



Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, P.O.Box 310  
Smoky Lake, Alberta T0A 3C0

November 27, 2020

Letter of Support for Nomination a Portion of the North Saskatchewan River, Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)

To Whom It May Concern,

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon and the presentation by Smoky Lake County's Kyle Schole at the Thorhild County Council Meeting on November 24, 2020, Thorhild County Council would like to support the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS.)

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada."* – from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005.)

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Importantly, Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Grumetza".

Kevin Grumetza  
Reeve



November 30, 2020

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

To Whom it May Concern,

RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River, Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of Lamont County, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

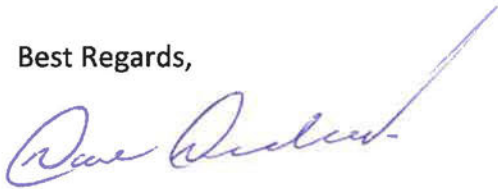
*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada." - from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).*

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation. Further, Lamont and Smoky Lake Counties are presently working together towards jointly adopting of an Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP), and an Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF). Both documents will enhance and facilitate a spirit of partnership, contemplate future land uses, support agriculture and tourism, as well as the natural, cultural, and recreational values associated with the river corridor.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.



Best Regards,



David Diduck  
Reeve, Lamont County

cc: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant



# VILLAGE OF WASKATENAU

Box 99, Waskatenau, Alberta T0A 3P0

Phone: (780) 358-2208  
Fax: (780) 358-2208  
Email: [waskvillage@mcnet.ca](mailto:waskvillage@mcnet.ca)  
Website: [www.waskatenau.ca](http://www.waskatenau.ca)

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, Alberta  
T0A 3C0

December 21, 2020

**RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River,  
Canadian Heritage River System(CHRS)**

---

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of Village of Waskatenau, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada."-from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005)".*

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

*C. Caron*

Casey Caron, Mayor  
Village of Waskatenau

cc: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant, <[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>

*"Country living at its Best"*



# HISTORIC VILNA

A true Alberta boomtown...

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0



Sent by: Regular Mail

December 17, 2020

**RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River,  
Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom it May Concern,

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of Village of Vilna, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada." - from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).*

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Best Regards,

Leo Chapdelaine,  
Mayor

leochapdelaine.icloud.com  
780-636-3620

cc: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant, <[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>

COUNTY OF   
**TWO HILLS**

---

P.O Box 490, Two Hills AB T0B 4K0  
Telephone: (780) 657-3358 Fax: (780) 657-3504

December 16, 2020

Council of Smoky Lake County  
4612 – McDougall Drive  
P.O. Box 310  
Smoky Lake, Alberta, T0A 3C0

**Re: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River, Canadian Heritage River System**

Dear Council of Smoky Lake County:

This will advise that the Council of the County of Two Hills resolved, at their meeting on December 16, 2020, that the County of Two Hills approve the supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System, with the condition that the County be notified of any future amendments which may impact the County of Two Hills.

Should you have any questions or concerns, you may contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,



Sally Dary  
Chief Administrative Officer

# COUNTY OF ST. PAUL

5015 – 49 Avenue, St. Paul, Alberta, T0A 3A4  
www.county.stpaul.ab.ca



*Our Mission - To create desirable rural experiences*

December 9, 2020

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB  
T0A 3C0

Dear Smoky Lake County Council,

**RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River,  
Canadian Heritage River system (CHRS)**

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and your presentation at the County Council meeting on December 8, 2020 we are very much interested in supporting the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture... designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada" – from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).*

Since CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program and designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, with no new rules or restrictions being created because of participation; the County of St. Paul supports the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

We wish Smoky Lake County much success as they work through this process.

Best Regards,

Steve Upham  
Reeve

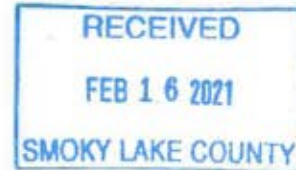
cc:  Kyle Schole  
Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant, Smoky Lake County



File No. 21-03

January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB  
T0A 3C0



To Whom it May Concern,

**RE:** Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River, Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)

Further to the letter dated October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of the Town of Elk Point, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture... designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada." – from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).*

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lorne Young".

Lorne Young  
Mayor  
Town of Elk Point

LY/cp

C.c Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant



4912 50 Avenue, Box 69  
Kitscoty, Alberta T0B 2P0  
Ph: 780.846.2244  
Fax: 780.846.2716  
[www.vermilion-river.com](http://www.vermilion-river.com)

December 16, 2020

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive  
Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River, Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)

To whom it may concern,

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment & Parks, Jason Nixon, and on behalf of the County of Vermilion River, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

“The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture.....designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural and recreational values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are considered for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada.” – from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Best Regards,

Lonnie Wolgien  
Reeve, County of Vermilion River

Cc: Kyle Schole Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant,  
<[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>



## Office of the Mayor

December 19, 2019

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (AB)  
202-9440 49 Street  
Edmonton, AB T6B 2M9

North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (SK)  
Box 458  
Hafford, SK S0J 1A0

**RE: Letter of Support for Inter-Provincial Nomination of the  
North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom It May Concern,

Further to the letter submitted by Smoky Lake County Council, dated October 30, 2019, I am pleased to provide this letter of support on behalf of the City of Spruce Grove toward an inter-provincial nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). Further to the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance *Heritage River Background Study* (2005):

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture between federal, provincial, and territorial governments designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada."*

We agree that the River should be nominated on an inter-provincial basis under this program. Indeed, the entire reach of the Saskatchewan and North Saskatchewan Rivers are rich in cultural, natural, and recreation value. Our communities are greatly enhanced by the health and legacy of the River, which deserves to be both protected and celebrated.

Again, we support the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion into the Canadian Heritage River System, and we are hopeful that other community partners and river neighbors will lend their support as well.

Sincerely,

Stuart Houston  
Mayor

c: City of Spruce Grove Council  
Smoky Lake County

*The Community of Choice*



Town of Marshall  
17 Main Street, Box 125  
S0M 1R0

December 18, 2019

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (AB)  
202-9440 49 Street  
Edmonton, AB T6B 2M9

North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (SK)  
Box 458  
Hafford, SK, S0J 1A0



**RE: Letter of Support for Inter-Provincial Nomination of the  
North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom It May Concern,

Further to the letter submitted by Smoky Lake County Council, dated October 30, 2019, I am pleased to provide this letter of support on behalf of **Town of Marshall** toward an inter-provincial nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). Further to the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance *Heritage River Background Study* (2005):

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture between federal, provincial, and territorial governments designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada."*

We agree that the River should be nominated on an inter-provincial basis under this program. Indeed, the entire reach of the Saskatchewan and North Saskatchewan Rivers are rich in cultural, natural, and recreation value. Our communities are greatly enhanced by the health and legacy of the River, which deserves to be both protected and celebrated.

Again, we support the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion into the Canadian Heritage River System, and we are hopeful that other community partners and river neighbors will lend their support as well.

Best Regards,

Mayor, Town of Marshall

cc: Smoky Lake County

**Letter of Support  
Inter-Provincial Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River  
Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**



December 23, 2019

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (AB)  
202-9440 49 Street  
Edmonton, AB T6B 2M9

North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (SK)  
Box 458  
Hafford, SK, S0J 1A0

**RE: Letter of Support for Inter-Provincial Nomination of the  
North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom It May Concern,

Further to the letter submitted by Smoky Lake County Council, dated October 30, 2019, I am pleased to provide this letter of support on behalf of the Town of Stony Plain toward an inter-provincial nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). Further to the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance *Heritage River Background Study* (2005):

*“The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture between federal, provincial, and territorial governments designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada.”*

We agree that the River should be nominated on an inter-provincial basis under this program. Indeed, the entire reach of the Saskatchewan and North Saskatchewan Rivers are rich in cultural, natural, and recreation value. Our communities are greatly enhanced by the health and legacy of the River, which deserves to be both protected and celebrated.

Again, we support the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion into the Canadian Heritage River System, and we are hopeful that other community partners and river neighbors will lend their support as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William Choy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mayor William Choy

cc: Smoky Lake County



December 12, 2019

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (AB)  
202-9440 49 Street Edmonton, AB T6B 2M9

North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (SK)  
Box 458 Hafford, SK, S0J 1A0

**RE: Letter of Support for Inter-Provincial Nomination of the  
North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom It May Concern,

Further to the letter submitted by Smoky Lake County Council, dated October 30, 2019, I am pleased to provide this letter of support on behalf of the Northeast Alberta Information HUB (Alberta HUB) toward an inter-provincial nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). Further to the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance *Heritage River Background Study* (2005):

*“The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture between federal, provincial, and territorial governments designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada.”*

We agree that the River should be nominated on an inter-provincial basis under this program. Indeed, the entire reach of the Saskatchewan and North Saskatchewan Rivers are rich in cultural, natural, and recreation value. Our communities are greatly enhanced by the health and legacy of the River, which deserves to be both protected and celebrated.

Again, we support the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion into the Canadian Heritage River System, and we are hopeful that other community partners and river neighbors will lend their support as well.

Best Regards,

Steve Upham  
Chair Northeast Alberta Information HUB (Alberta HUB)

cc: Smoky Lake County



Serving our Residents since 1914

January 20, 2020

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (AB)  
202-9440 49 Street  
Edmonton, AB T6B 2M9

North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (SK)  
Box 458  
Hafford, SK, S0J 1A0



**RE: Letter of Support for Inter-Provincial Nomination of the  
North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom It May Concern,

Further to the letter submitted by Smoky Lake County Council, dated October 30, 2019, I am pleased to provide this letter of support on behalf of the Village of Clyde toward an inter-provincial nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). Further to the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance *Heritage River Background Study* (2005):

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture between federal, provincial, and territorial governments designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada."*

We agree that the River should be nominated on an inter-provincial basis under this program. Indeed, the entire reach of the Saskatchewan and North Saskatchewan Rivers are rich in cultural, natural, and recreation value. Our communities are greatly enhanced by the health and legacy of the River, which deserves to be both protected and celebrated.

Again, we support the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion into the Canadian Heritage River System, and we are hopeful that other community partners and river neighbors will lend their support as well.

Best Regards,

Jaye Parrent  
Finance and Assistant CAO

cc: **Smoky Lake County**



**Village of Marwayne**

Box 113, 210 2nd Ave N  
Marwayne, AB T0B 2X0

780-847-3962 P

780-847-3324 F

marwayne@mcsnet.ca

marwayne.ca

November 18, 2019

NORTH SASKATCHEWAN WATERSHED ALLIANCE  
202, 9440 – 49 STREET  
EDMONTON, AB T6B 2M9

**RE: Letter of Support for Inter-Provincial Nomination of the  
North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom It May Concern,

Further to the letter submitted by Smoky Lake County Council, dated October 30, 2019, we are pleased to provide this letter of support on behalf of the Village of Marwayne toward an inter-provincial nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). Further to the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance *Heritage River Background Study* (2005):

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture between federal, provincial, and territorial governments designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada."*

We agree that the River should be nominated on an inter-provincial basis under this program. Indeed, the entire reach of the Saskatchewan and North Saskatchewan Rivers are rich in cultural, natural, and recreation value. Our communities are greatly enhanced by the health and legacy of the River, which deserves to be both protected and celebrated.

Again, we support the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion into the Canadian Heritage River System, and we are hopeful that other community partners and river neighbors will lend their support as well.

Best Regards,

  
Cheryl Eikeland  
Mayor, Village of Marwayne

cc: North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (Saskatchewan)



January 16, 2020

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (AB)  
202-9440 49 Street  
Edmonton, AB T6B 2M9

North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (SK)  
Box 458  
Hafford, SK, S0J 1A0



RE: **Letter of Support for Inter-Provincial Nomination of the  
North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom It May Concern,

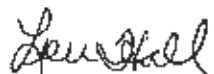
Further to the letter submitted by Smoky Lake County Council, dated October 30, 2019, I am pleased to provide this letter of support on behalf of Westlock County toward an inter-provincial nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS). Further to the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance *Heritage River Background Study* (2005):

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture between federal, provincial, and territorial governments designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada."*

We agree that the River should be nominated on an inter-provincial basis under this program. Indeed, the entire reach of the Saskatchewan and North Saskatchewan Rivers are rich in cultural, natural, and recreation value. Our communities are greatly enhanced by the health and legacy of the River, which deserves to be both protected and celebrated.

Again, we support the nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion into the Canadian Heritage River System, and we are hopeful that other community partners and river neighbors will lend their support as well.

Sincerely,



Lou Hall,  
Reeve

cc: Smoky Lake County

## Kyle Schole

---

**From:** Matthew Ferris <mferris@lsac.ca>  
**Sent:** January 17, 2020 3:02 PM  
**To:** Craig Lukinuk  
**Subject:** North Saskatchewan River as a Canadian Heritage River System

At our January 9<sup>th</sup> 2020 Council meeting Council passed motion 11-2020 supporting the application of the North Saskatchewan River as a Canadian Heritage River System

**Matthew Ferris** | Manager of Planning and Development

**Lac Ste. Anne County**

Box 219 | Sangudo AB, T0E 2A0

Tel **(780) 785-3411** | Toll Free **1 (866) 880-5722**

This email communication is CONFIDENTIAL AND LEGALLY PRIVILEGED. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify me at the telephone number shown above or by return email and delete this communication and any copy immediately. Thank you.

 **Think about our Environment. Print only if necessary.**



January 12, 2021

To Whom it May Concern,

RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River,  
Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of Yellowhead County, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada." - from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Best Regards,



Mayor Jim Eglinski  
Yellowhead County

/tp



Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

Sent by: Regular Mail

January 13, 2021

**RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River,  
Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

---

To Whom it May Concern,

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of Camrose County, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

*“The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada.” - from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).*

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The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Best Regards,

Cindy Trautman, Reeve  
Camrose County

e: [ctrautman@county.camrose.ab.ca](mailto:ctrautman@county.camrose.ab.ca) / p: (780) 672-4446

cc: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant , <[kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)>

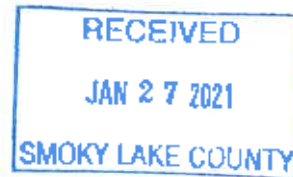


## BEAVER COUNTY

Box 140  
Ryley, Alberta T0B 4A0

---

Smoky Lake County Council  
4612 McDougall Drive, PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0



January 11, 2021

**RE: Letter of Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River,  
Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS)**

To Whom it May Concern,

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of Beaver County, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

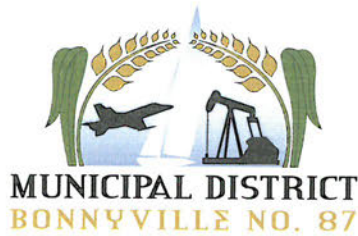
*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada." - from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).*

The CHRS is a voluntary, community-driven program. Designation under the CHRS does not add to or increase existing development restrictions along the River corridor, and no new rules or restrictions are created because of participation.

The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Best Regards,

Gene Hrabec  
Deputy Reeve  
Beaver County



January 20, 2021

Attn: Reeve & Council  
Smoky Lake County  
4612 McDougall Drive,  
PO Box 310  
Smoky Lake, AB T0A 3C0

To Whom it May Concern,

**RE: Support for Nomination of the North Saskatchewan River to the Canadian Heritage River System**

---

Further to the letter dated October 23, 2020 from Alberta Minister of Environment and Parks Jason Nixon, and on behalf of the M.D. of Bonnyville No. 87, it is a pleasure to provide this letter supporting nomination of the North Saskatchewan River for the Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS).

*"The Canadian Heritage River System is a cooperative venture ...designed to offer international, national, provincial and regional recognition to outstanding rivers in Canada that demonstrate exceptional examples of Canadian cultural, natural, and recreation values. The main objective is to ensure the long-term management of these rivers in order that their unique values are conserved for the continuing benefit and enjoyment of Canadians and visitors to Canada." - from the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) Heritage River Background Study (2005).*

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The CHRS serves to celebrate and safeguard the future of our environment for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of future generations. As such, we support the nomination of a portion of the North Saskatchewan River for inclusion as a nationally recognized watercourse within the Canadian Heritage River System.

Yours truly,

Greg Sawchuk  
Reeve

/ja

cc: Kyle Schole, Planning, Development, & Heritage Assistant, [kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca](mailto:kschole@smokylakecounty.ab.ca)

## **Appendix C: Indigenous Engagement Report & Record - 2023**

# kisiskâciwan-sîpî

## Heritage River Initiative Study

---

Submitted to:  
02 Design; Leif Olson

Submitted by:  
pipikwan pêhtâkwan  
10160 103 St NW  
Edmonton, AB T5J 0X6  
Phone: 587-254-3696  
[pipikwanpehtakwan.com](http://pipikwanpehtakwan.com)





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## Background

The County of Smoky Lake has initiated the process of designating the kisiskâciwan-sîpî, the North Saskatchewan River, as a Heritage River. An important piece of this process is engaging with the Indigenous communities that have both historic and current traditional ties to kisiskâciwan-sîpî. pipikwan pêhtâkwan partnered with 02 Design and visited with communities between November 2022 and March 2023 to hear stories and understand the requests for accountability to Indigenous stakeholders.

The method used was more of a principle than a technique; which is visiting. Indigenous Scholar Cindy Gaudet has proposed keeoukaywin: The Visiting Way - Fostering an Indigenous Research Methodology; as a way of conducting research with and for Indigenous communities. Gaudet (2019) shares that “with relationality at its core, keeoukaywin re-centres Métis and Cree ways of being, and presents a practical and meaningful methodology that fosters miyopimatisiwin, living and being well in relation”. Using visiting as an approach for relationship building, our activities were grounded in co-leading the dialogue and prioritizing community protocol when speaking about the River. While we connected with many nations, we refer to the River by its Cree name, kisiskâciwan-sîpî as this was the language of the Elders who opened this project in a good way.

Purpose of the work:

- Hear and gather stories across the designated space of kisiskâciwan-sîpî
- Learn how Indigenous communities have connected with the River, past, present, and future
- Learn Indigenous perspectives on governance and what co-governance might look like
- Build relationships with Indigenous stakeholders

What we produced:

- A collection of stories retold from the perspective of the listener
- Descriptions of Indigenous Peoples' connection with the River
- Recommendations on the future of the Heritage River governance



## Researcher's Statement

Research is intended to bring change, but we often forget that we ourselves are changed by the research we conduct. Linda Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) notes that research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise, but rather an activity that is framed by the social conditions and the researcher's own experience.

As a mi'kmaq woman on one side, and a first-generation Canadian on the other, my own relationship with kisiskâciwan-sîpî has only recently germinated. Being new to these territories, my relations have not been in connection with this river historically. Spiritually, on the other hand, the dialogue about water connects Indigenous peoples back to our mother earth; Someone we all have learned from and are in relationship with to different degrees.

Through my journey learning Indigenous research methodologies, I fall deeper into my lessons from Stephanie Tyler *PhD Candidate, RSW*, Kristina Koop, *MSW, RSW* and Elder Leona Makokis, *PhD*.

From a Western lens, when we read a book or hear a story, there is an expectation that the storyteller is clear and descriptive. The story listener must try to put themselves in the mind of the storyteller to gain insight. Then, when we write about the stories we hear, we try and re-share the stories or critique them. There is a word for this - rhetorical analysis.

Indigenous storytelling is deeper. When Indigenous people tell stories, the responsibility is on the story listener to be introspective and understand the story from their own experiences and perspectives. As oral storytellers, the writing of stories can sometimes cross ethical and culturally appropriate boundaries. So when we have been permitted to share these stories we have a choice: fall into Western methods or lean into our heart. For this reason, all of the stories that have been shared with me throughout this journey, I will re-tell them from my perspective as the story listener. I acknowledge this concept is not new. Jo-Ann Archibald has built a framework for story work that I will explore in this journey. As a beginner to story work, I am excited by the chance to learn this framework through experience.

To all the participants who sat with me and shared story, wela'lin, nata'n teliula'lin.  
Thank you, I do well by you.



## Scope & Approach

Before I share stories, I think it is important to summarize the scope and approach to this work.

- pipikwan pêhtâkwan started the project with a Circle of Elders in amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton, AB), on November 17, 2022. The Elders and community members present started the project out in a good way, and for all the knowledge, teachings and blessings they shared, we thank them.
- As our project kicked off, I reached out to Indigenous communities across Alberta. In many cases, I began visiting, keeoukaywin, for the purpose of sharing myself and getting to know the communities. Afterward, I would visit again and begin the work together.
- In a few cases, communities were happy to visit, and work, during the same period. Most of the time this was done in person, but some did visit virtually.
- For some parts of the project, I got to sit in relationship with Elders, one to one, and hear their personal stories, learn about their relationship to the River, and share food. It was an honour to receive their teachings and guidance from them.
- One challenge with reaching more communities was timing. Community is busy! There is lots of important work happening. To fit in another project may have taken the community away from their collective priorities.
- Additionally, our engagement was focused between December 2022 and February 2023. This timeline wasn't a great fit for some but did open doors to future collaboration.
- Another challenge was navigating the amount of work happening related to kisiskâciwan-sîpî! Some communities passed on visiting because they felt they already had dialogue related to the River. Some did not visit but still passed along notes from other work, which they allowed to be incorporated into this document.
- Overall, there were 15 communities who welcomed us with initial visits and, of those, 10 had participated in further dialogue. In total, 68 community members shared in stories and recommendations for this project.
- I see these 68 participants as co-researchers in this work. Therefore, you own this document too. Like the River, this document is a living, breathing spirit and can grow and change with time.
- My approach is to practice storytelling; the way the information was given to me, in story.



## My Personal Story

### Connecting Myself to the River.

My story is a personal one, one of my own experience. I share this as a way to situate myself in this research. Indigenous research means we no longer disconnect ourselves from the research we conduct. Quite the opposite, we embrace our identity, and our experience, and speak about it openly. To honour this, I want to share a recent experience.

Last year, I joined my colleagues for a paddle down the River, in an inflatable boat. Our craft was Captain'd by a strong, independent eight-year-old. Yes, you read that correctly. She was only eight years old, but she commanded the ten of us with ease. Unifying the group with her instructions, stroke, stroke, stroke, we travelled down the *kisiskâciwan-sîpî* with purpose. But, like any other eight-year-old, she quickly grew tired of leading the ship and slyly slipped in a request to go swimming. As I mentioned earlier, I am new to my relationship with the River. I hear stories of pollution and contaminated fishing. I'm a huge fisher woman! Fishing brings me so much peace. Unlike my eight-year-old friend, I could never tire of fishing.

I also have a soft spot for children. I'm not a mother myself, but I have motherly qualities. Weak to the puppy dog eyes of this little one, I whispered to her mom, "I can take her in if you are okay with that". Her mom agreed and the two of us quickly made our way into *kisiskâciwan-sîpî*. She jumped in first. So quickly I might add, that she forgot to take her gum out of her pocket. I followed her speed and jumped in. The current was quite fast. I guess that is why the Cree say, *kisiskâciwan-sîpî*; it means swift-flowing river.

We held on to the raft and let *kisiskâciwan-sîpî* carry us beside our friends. A few times she tried to swim away, but I'm not that soft, I can say no sometimes. Eventually, we started to get closer to the end of our journey and my team hoisted me back up. In reality, it was a two-boat effort but let's not talk about that.

Following our adventure, we planned to gather at a team member's house. The cab came to take us back to our car and it smelled horrible. I could not wait to get into my vehicle. When I did, I realized the smell was still there. It was not the cab, it was me! Bathed in *kisiskâciwan-sîpî*, water that once could have cleaned me, rotted me instead.



## The Cardinal's Hallways

### A story re-imagined.

It was a snowy winter day. oskanêw, Cardinal, had just finished an important job and was feeling something new inside. See, he helped some others find a lost friend, but he wasn't exactly sure how he even did it. Cardinal decided he needed to take a journey by himself and reflect. He began flight, gliding up and down, further and further away from his home. Even through the thick snowflakes, Cardinal's deep red feathers were still intense.

Getting very tired and hungry, Cardinal searched for a dense tree to take a break.

With a big tree in his eyesight, he flew right to the closest branch and began taking a nap. As he slept, a strong wind gust swooped in from nowhere, straight across the branch. Cardinal didn't know it at the time, but the branch he stepped on had a broken connection to the tree trunk. It snapped off. Before he even awoke, he had hit another branch and hurt his wing. Cardinal tumbled down the thick trunk and landed on the ground.

Cardinal lay on the ground, tending to his injuries when a young woman walked by. She spotted Cardinal's bright feathers and walked

over. She told Cardinal she has a warm pocket under her coat and offered to put him in. Cardinal wasn't sure what to do, but the woman had an energy that made him trust her, so he agreed. Gently, the woman picked Cardinal up, opened her jacket and placed him in her pocket. The pocket was attached to a sweater she has underneath, and it was nestled right beside her heart. Cardinal felt safe.

The woman carried Cardinal back to her house. On her mantel, she has three different round bowls. Cardinal immediately noticed the bright white bowl. The woman shared that this bowl belonged to her friend. She left it with her for protection while she travelled around. Before Cardinal could examine the other two, his eyes shifted toward the one he knew was for him. He felt strongly the woman was going to offer to make this bowl into a nest for him, and she did exactly that.

Cardinal got comfortable in his bowl and spent his days watching the woman come and go. Sometimes she would disappear for days, but she always returned.



## The Cardinal's Hallways cont.

Over time, Cardinal began to feel better. He wanted to try flying, but he was patient. He began by flapping his wings, allowing himself to feel the air underneath them. After a while, he decided it was time to try. Cardinal stood on the edge of the mantle and began flying.

He had never flown inside a house before. From the room he started in, he realized he could go in three directions. Each down a long, narrow hall that took him to a different room. No matter how far down the hall he travelled, Cardinal always knew that following the hall would bring him back to the mantle, and the bowls.

Eventually, the time came for Cardinal to head back to his home. His wing was healing, and he knew that he couldn't stay with the woman forever. He thanked her for her kindness and promised to visit often. Each year, Cardinal made the long journey back to visit his friend. Sometimes it was harder to find than others. The landscape was continually changing and Cardinal lost a lot of the visual markers he used to navigate himself back to the woman's home.

During one visit, she told Cardinal she was afraid she would be forced to move. Cardinal asked the woman why she felt this way. She sighed deeply and explained, these developers had taken away all the resources around her. She couldn't grow fruits or vegetables, she couldn't get wood for her fire, and she couldn't hunt any food.

After listening, Cardinal flew to the mantle, sitting with the bowls again. He then took flight and began flying down each hallway. Cardinal very much wanted the woman to keep her home, but he knew that if the developers kept going, these hallways would never be there for him to fly again.

*Thank you for sharing your personal experience with me. I felt the power in your story. I know you thought you didn't leave me with much, but the learning I took from your story grounds me in knowing how important it is to protect these spiritual places. hiy hiy*



## The Snake's Vibrations

### A story re-imagined.

Rattlesnake had just finished finally shedding his skin. Three days before, he had slithered over to the bank of the river and rubbed his head on a large bolder. He knew he needed the rock's help to renew and start regenerating himself again.

As he moved around his prairie landscape, trying to let go of his old skin, he made a few stops to visit friends. His first visit was to Caribou. Rattlesnake and Caribou were sharing stories and laughing. They had a very playful relationship. All of a sudden, Caribou looks down at Rattlesnake and jokes, "Rattlesnake, you are always walking on the ground, I can never see all of you. Do you have tiny legs down there?". Rattlesnake playfully hissed his tongue at Caribou. He then smiles softly and explains, "There are two sides to me. One always touches the land, and one always faces the sky". He then laughs at Caribou and says "Unlike you, your belly floats somewhere in the middle". The two finished their laughs and Rattlesnake continued on his journey.

On his next visit, Rattlesnake decided to visit his friend Eagle. The two had a different relationship than Rattlesnake and Caribou. Eagle was more wise, and Rattlesnake enjoyed talking about deep, meaningful things in his life. Rattlesnake began sharing with Eagle that sometimes he felt alone. He wished that he could shout, like their friend Wolf. Anytime Wolf feels alone, he can howl and his friends come find him. Eagle took Rattlesnake under his wing and told him, "Rattlesnake, you have a tail that makes beautiful music". Rattlesnake sighed. He knew he had a tail, but it always scared others away, it didn't bring them closer. Eagle whispered sweetly, "It doesn't scare me". Rattlesnake smiled and gave his tail a little wiggle. Eagle told him, "If you ever feel alone, you just have to rattle your tail. Remember, I can see a lot from up here, and you are not alone". Rattlesnake was warmed inside. He began making his way, but he knew that he could always hear his friend through his vibrations if he just rattled his tail.

Rattlesnake had time to visit one more friend.





## The Snake's Vibrations cont.

He made his way to Muskrat's place. Muskrat was pretty tired, but he welcomed Rattlesnake in. Muskrat explained that he hadn't done much visiting all winter. He told Rattlesnake he was getting excited for the spring! The ice was shifting and melting, the water would start flowing, and that would make it easier for him to find food. Rattlesnake was excited for his friend and asked him what he likes the most about spring.

Muskrat thought for a moment, trying to remember last spring. It felt so far away, but he could imagine it because it was right around the corner. Muskrat said, "I like seeing the land wake up. It's beautiful to take something old and make something new". Rattlesnake, almost finished shedding his skin thought about his experience. He said to Muskrat, "Muskrat, I think I am like the spring. I shed my skin and I start new. My tail comes off and grows bigger".

Muskrat was curious about Rattlesnake. He never hung out with other animals who shed their skin like this. He said, "Rattlesnake, can I ask you a question about your skin?".

Rattlesnake loved questions! It gave him a chance to think about his journey. He nodded at Muskrat and allowed him to ask his question. Muskrat tilted his head and asked, "What happens to your skin when you leave it?". Rattlesnake never thought about that before. Usually, he just slithered away and never really saw it again. Thinking deeply, he answered, "I think when I shed my skin it just stays where I left it. It becomes a part of my history. Sometimes it's not straight, or clean, but it stays there, the trace of my connection between the land and the sky; my lifeline on the path to starting new.". Muskrat nodded to show his understanding. He said to Rattlesnake, "My friend, I think you are just like the spring".

*Thank you for sharing these teachings with me. I know I asked a lot of questions, but you walked me through the journey with patience. I am learning a stronger connection between the water and Creator. I will let my vibrations connect me in the way you taught me. hiy hiy*



# The Badger's Escape

## A Story Re-imagined

Badger was having a bad day. He was growing more frustrated over the past few weeks. The nights were cold, but the days were very hot. To top it off, there hadn't been a sprinkle of rain in weeks. Badger had a set of matches that he could use to make a fire. He looked at them every day, but he knew he couldn't use them because, in these conditions, it was not safe. Badger learned from the older Badgers that when it's dry, fires can spread and destroy the land. But Badger was growing impatient.

He waited a day, then another and another. He was cold every night and had a difficult time sleeping. Eventually, Badger went to his family and asked what he should do. Each visit, someone different told him the same thing, "Badger, you cannot start the fire. You will hurt all the other animals". Badger knew this was true, and so he put his matches away.

Even though he decided to listen, it did not stop Badger from being angry. Every night he would be mad, and every day he would be tired. No one would give Badger advice on what he could do to stay warm, they just

yelled at him not to start the fire!

After another few weeks of cold nights, hot days, and no rain, Badger decided his only option was to start the fire, but he was going to be *very* careful. Badger gathered everything he needed. He gathered many rocks and piled them up, layer by layer, on the side. He made it taller than himself so it would protect the land. Inside, he built the fire. Badger climbed up his wall and looked down the hole. He contemplated if he should light the fire or not. He thought about the risk. He also thought about all the work he did to build a safe fire.

Badger climbed down. When his feet were planted on the ground, he lit the match and tossed it in. The fire started and it began warming him up! He walked around the walls of the fire to make sure everything looked good. He saw no problems and gave himself a pat on the back for a job well done. Badger sat by the fire, finally warming up. What Badger forgot was how great it feels to be warm!

As the flames continued to burn, they warmed his face. After weeks of not getting a good



## The Badger's Escape

sleep, Badger's eyes began to get sleepy. The warmth of the fire had relaxed his entire body so much he uncontrollably fell asleep.

The fire continued to burn through the night, but as it did, the rocks continued to grow hotter. Eventually, they got so hot that the grass beside them caught fire. Badger was so tired he didn't wake up until it was too late to stop it. Fire had begun to burn all across the field. It burned all the grass, and it was moving into the forest. Trees caught on fire. It didn't matter what animals were around, they were all in trouble.

Badger had run in the other direction and narrowly escaped the fire. Many other animals were not so lucky. The fire had burned their homes and taken many of their lives. Badger had no choice. He could not go back to his home. There was no shelter or food left. He and some other Badgers who survived had travelled down the River, away from the ash-covered land.

Years went by, and Badger grew into his new home and built a family. People shared the story of the great fire. Eventually Badger

passed away. Generations of his family continued to grow but they did not share his story. They did not want to remember the loss that Badger caused. Years continued without the Badgers talking about the fire. Eventually, they forgot.

Years and years later, a Badger family member was celebrating with the Beaver family. Beaver invited Badger to his lodge, fed him, and shared his knowledge. Badger was trying to be friendly, but Beaver looked over and told him, "Your people are bad". Badger had no idea what he was talking about. Beaver shared the story about the great fire and all the death that was caused. Badger did not believe him at first, but he went to speak to an Old one and asked, "kaaahsinnoon, did our ancestors have a great fire that killed many other animals"? His Grandfather looked at him, "Yes. We did that".

*Thank you for sharing this deep history with me. I learned the importance of truth, even if it hurts. It connects us to the River, and the true reasons people found themselves in relation with Omakaty, the North Saskatchewan River. All my relations.*



## The Jackfish's Catch

### A Story Re-imagined

Jackfish was hanging out in the cold, rocky water, thinking about what she could get up to today. She was surrounded by other Jack and never really spent a day alone. She dreamed of what it might look like to be alone for a while. Not competing for food. Not defending herself against other Jack who tries to take her napping space. Most importantly, not worrying about her eggs.

Jackfish was getting hungry though and decided that it might be time to get a snack. She heard rumblings about a great spot that was filled with smaller fish that day. She headed over and scoped out a good place to wait. She was very fast, but she knew that in order to get the burst of energy needed to catch the fish, she would have to be patient. There were other Jackfish everywhere! She saw others get fish after fish, but there were too many of them, and not enough to eat.

She groaned to herself again and thought how great it would be to be alone. All of a sudden a fish landed quite close to her! Jackfish locked her focus, and without thinking twice she launched herself at her lunch. She took a hard

bite and felt a little pinch. Ouch!

All of a sudden Jackfish was being dragged by her mouth to the surface of the water. She pulled and pulled, trying to get away. Her heart was racing and her mouth was being torn. She knew that she had no chance, but her mind started thinking about her children. She thought about all her friends and family. She wasn't going to give up that fast! Jackfish broke the surface but she kept fighting. She zoomed left, she zagged right! She pulled herself downward, even though it was hurting her mouth.

No matter how hard she worked, Jackfish kept getting dragged up to the surface. Eventually, she looked around. There was a young man, he wasn't quite a child, but he wasn't an adult either. She didn't know much about humans, but she heard that sometimes they pull you out of the River. Sometimes you come back, sometimes you don't. The young man was double her size but she decided to keep fighting. As soon as she got close to him, she tried again. Zoom left, zag right. she told herself.



## The Jackfish's Catch

She caught him off guard and pulled so hard he almost fell in. He brought her up to him and she froze. He hooked his hand in her mouth and pulled out the pinching object. The pain was still there, but she felt relieved. He put his fingers under her gills and held her on his side. She was at eye level with his chest. She wondered if she would be one of the Jackfish to go back home or not. And if not, where was she going?

At this point, she was struggling to breathe. The young boy had her out of the water for a while and she was starting to think it was the end. He laid her on the ground, and she wondered if she could jump all the way back into the River. Before she could act, everything went black.

Jackfish gave her life to feed the young man. In the beginning, she struggled with the idea, but after a while, she softened. She knew Creator asked her to help the humans by giving her body for food. She was happy to live her responsibility and her spirit stayed watching over her home, the River.

It was about 30 years later, and Jackfish visited the River. She looked around, but she did not see any other Jackfish. The water was lower, and there wasn't much room left. Either way, 'Where did all the fish go?', she thought.

Jackfish thought back to her wish. She wished to be alone, she wished for the water to be quiet. She felt guilty. What if this was her fault? What if her wish made all the fish disappear and the water shrink?

Jackfish asked the water, "Water, what can I do to heal you? You need the fish back. The young boy and his family will be hungry". Water said to her, "Pray for me. Things are not okay. But they can be, as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and I flow".

*Thank you for sharing your humour and stories with us. I acknowledge your strong voice on Indigenous rights and am grateful for your guidance on what the future can look like. I learned the undeniable impact an unhealthy River has on community. hiy hiy*



## Indigenous Peoples Connection kisiskâciwan-sîpî

There are many ways Indigenous people connect to water. The connections I discuss below are connections specifically made with kisiskâciwan-sîpî. Respecting oral history, some details are reserved for those who were present during the visits. Sacred teachings may be mentioned, but the details remain with those knowledge holders, to be shared with those who build the relationship and request that knowledge in an ethical way.

### Creation

Water is sacred. Water has spirit. Water is life, and water has a very profound place in the nehiyawak (Cree) Creation story. During the Circle of Elders opening dialogue, many shared about how Cree people are connected to all water through the creation of mother earth. The creation story is shared by those who carry that traditional knowledge. There are shorter and longer versions of this story, but each shares an important lesson, water was here first and is the source of life for humans. The Elders in this Circle shared about their spiritual connections to kisiskâciwan-sîpî and their interactions with the River, in and around, amiskwacîwâskahikan. What I learned from my colleagues who attended this opening was how much hope Indigenous people, and specifically our Elders, have for repairing the health of the River in the way Creator intended it. By understanding our original teachings, like the creation story, we can no longer play ignorant of our kinship responsibilities to kisiskâciwan-sîpî.

### Trade

In the thick of colonization, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) explored the River in desire of trading with nehiyawak. Fort Edmonton was one of the largest and most prominent posts for trade. Settlers depended on Indigenous Peoples for these trades yet Indigenous Peoples continued to be unrecognized for their role in economics. The River, a gathering place for many reasons, was also used for trade between Indigenous nations long before European settlers entered the picture. If we speak about kisiskâciwan-sîpî and trade, we cannot remove Indigenous history before HBC. What I learned from the dialogue on trade is that many nations have an economic relationship with the River, for example, the Iron Confederacy. The difference from Settlers is that Indigenous People honour the water as a connector for economics, not as a resource for economic gain.



## Ceremony

It didn't matter if I was visiting with Gift Lake Métis Settlement in Treaty 8, the Blackfoot Confederacy in Treaty 7, or anyone along my path in between, Indigenous communities share many stories of ceremonies held near the River. It was told to me that some sacred ceremonial sites, such as those for Sun Dance, have had to be moved because of the harm to the River. Water is *needed* for many ceremonies. It can symbolize purity and life. Without access to clean, healthy water, some ceremonies are at risk of being lost. Indigenous people now have to pray for *kisiskâciwan-sîpî*, instead of through and alongside them. I learned that not all people know the protocols of the water because the spirit of the water is hurt. Water is sick, and this is the time to bring healing to the River. In return, the River will help bring healing to the rest of the world.

## Women's Role

Grandmother Moon controls the tides in both women and the waters. With such a powerful connection, women are given the responsibility to be protectors of the water. This means we are protectors for *kisiskâciwan-sîpî*, and in return, *kisiskâciwan-sîpî* supports the swimmers, the crawlers, the legged ones, the winged ones, and the plants. I learned that it is more than a spiritual relationship between women and the River, this is an all-encompassing relationship; it is an ethical one, an ontological one, a kinship one, a reciprocal one, and a holistic one. It goes beyond the defined parameters of the English language. Specifically, when learning about women's role in being water protectors, I learned that there are many words to describe the water on the River. For example, in Cree, there are even words to describe the water *around* a Beaver dam. Indigenous women need to be involved in the dialogue about *kisiskâciwan-sîpî* as a Heritage River, because Western worldview, language, and connection is too limited.

## Medicines

There are many traditional medicines found along the banks and land of *kisiskâciwan-sîpî*. In some cases, these medicines are needed for sacred bundles, such as the Beaver Bundle of the Blackfoot People. Indigenous people across Alberta shared stories about medicines that were found near the River before, but now extractive developments have destroyed the land and many of these medicines are lost. Rat root, a healing medicine, was once easily found near parts of *kisiskâciwan-sîpî* closest to O'Chiese First Nation. Today, this community has to travel a long distance to find this medicine.



## **Medicines cont.**

The story of lost medicine was not uncommon. Many communities have lost proximity and access to traditional medicines. I learned that developers have a legal duty of *consulting* with Indigenous communities about the land and medicines, but often, they proceed without a land restoration plan. At least, without one that was agreed upon by Elders and community. kisiskâciwan-sîpî has given life to many medicines and has moved them further away to protect them. However, in doing so, Indigenous communities are being re-harmed by colonization because it is the harmful development the River is responding to.

## **Hunting & Fishing**

Just as the medicines have left, so have the animals. Lands that were once plenty with moose, elk, and deer are now sparse. The animal world speaks to other societies in a language humans don't understand. Animals learn from kisiskâciwan-sîpî and have retreated to water further away. The impact has been harmful to Indigenous communities who depend on hunting to sustain life. Parts of the moose are sacred and needed for specific ceremonies. Without the ability to hunt, Indigenous people will go more than hungry, their spirits will starve. I learned how important animals are for navigating the land. If you see a sick deer, you can follow him and watch the plants he eats to heal himself. These are the plants you can also eat if you are sick. The River brings the animal world close to the human world. Without a healthy river, we also lose this healthy kinship.

Fishing has also been impacted by the River. Dams are being built and have lowered the water level. Less fish can survive. Parts of kisiskâciwan-sîpî were once a major source of food for communities. Now, communities shared, they wouldn't even think of eating the fish in these waters. I learned about the polarizing difference seen in fishing between today, and less than 30 years ago. If kisiskâciwan-sîpî doesn't start with Heritage Designation, I worry about what the next 30 years might look like.

## **Recreation**

I smile thinking about the stories I heard of fun and laughter on the River. Friends sharing experiences, playing and learning together. I think about my own experience. What would recreation look like if kisiskâciwan-sîpî was healthy? I learned that the way people interact with the River today is not how we interacted with the River in the past.





## Governance & the Future

Indigenous governance is much like Indigenous research, collaborative and collective. Governance around the water should be treated with special care due to the unique and deep relationship between these two kin. I want to start by acknowledging the voices of many communities I visited with - this is only the very beginning. The work done and reflected in this report is barely a starting point. Community *wants* to be involved, and they want the conversation to continue. The reflections in this section are summarized and come with some recommendations. As mentioned at the beginning of this document, this document is living and breathing. It can, and should, change with more community input.

### Designation Without Protection Lacks Depth

Heritage River Designation is not important to Indigenous People. That is, unless this work is a stepping stone for legal protections for the River. Designation without protection lacks depth. Indigenous people work to heal the water, not put a label on it. We must consider what protection looks like and how that can be done under Heritage River Designation. Time used to designate the River could be used to follow the flow of the Magpie River and give kisiskâciwan-sîpî legal personhood.

### Recommendation(s)

- Use this knowledge, and team, to inform advocacy for legal protection and personhood.
- The designation should walk hand-in-hand with protection, like two canoes travelling together down the River, this journey should be taken side by side.

### Governance Begins Together, In Ceremony

Many nations feel these visits are only the start. Governance should not be designed until everyone comes together, in the same space, and co-develops the model. Indigenous people should be equal, or more, in number on governance teams because of their vast connections to the River. Governance that is drafted from recommendations only, and not through traditional, collective methods would not lend itself to a meaningful outcome. The important way to start



co-governance is through Ceremony at kisiskâciwan-sîpî, in amiskwacîwâskahikan. Meaningful work means that communities are invited with significant planning and that the traditional ecological knowledge needed is honoured.

### Recommendation(s)

- Bring community together and co-design a governance model that is informed by all perspectives.
- Ensure the voices around governance are weighed in the favour of Indigenous voices.
- Start with a ceremony in amiskwacîwâskahikan. Ask community members what ceremony would be most appropriate.
- Plan for, and provide funding for travel costs, protocol, and honourarium.

### Language Matters

There are many names for the North Saskatchewan River. kisiskâciwan-sîpî for the Cree, omaka-ty for the Blackfoot. Returning to original place names is a critical part of decolonizing. Understand how the integration of the language breathes a spirit into the work that cannot be done in English alone.

### Recommendation(s)

- Use the language of the people you are speaking with, when talking about the River.
- Learn and use original place names throughout documents and project deliverables.

*Dear kisiskâciwan-sîpî,*

*Thank you for guiding me on this journey. Thank you for the energy you give me as a woman. I honour this as I walked into community and ask to speak about you. Thank you for the knowledge you give our people to keep us connected to the spirit world. Thank you for the abundance you provide. I will pray for you. I will protect you. The work has just begun. hiy hiy*



## Appendix 1 - Co-Researchers

The below list are participants in the research.

### Communities & Agency

- Samson Cree Nation
- O'Chiese First Nation
- Kainai First Nation
- Siksika First Nation
- Piikani First Nation
- Whitefish (Atikameg) First Nation
- East Prairie Métis Settlement
- Gift Lake Métis Settlement
- Papachase First Nation #136
- Michel First Nation
- Keepers of the Water

### Elders, Knowledge Keepers & Community

- Elder Delores Cardinal
- Elder Clifford Cardinal
- Elder Jo-Ann Saddleback
- Elder Jerry Saddleback
- Elder Carola Cunningham
- Elder Daphne Alexis
- Elder Arnold Alexis
- Elder Tony Arcand
- Fernie Marty
- Jessica Dion

### Contributions for Knowledge of Indigenous Storytelling

- Stephanie Tyler, *PhD Candidate*
- Kristina Koop, *MSW, RSW*
- Elder Leona Makokis, *PhD*



## Appendix 1: Engagement Timeline

The following table represents key dates for engagement and partners involved.

Date of Engagement	Stakeholders	Type of Engagement
December 1, 2022	Samson Cree Nation	Virtual engagement session
January 25, 2023	O'Chiese First Nation	In person engagement session
January 26, 2023 & February 28, 2023	Kainai First Nation	Visit about project; In person engagement session
January 26, 2023 & February 28, 2023	Siksika First Nation	Visit about project; In person engagement session
January 26, 2023	Piikani First Nation	Dialogue about project
January 31, 2023	Whitefish (Atikameg) First Nation	Visit about project
January 16, 2023	East Prairie Métis Settlement	Visit about project
January 31, 2023	Gift Lake Métis Settlement	Visit about project
November 27, 2022	Papachase First Nation #136	Written contribution to project
November 27, 2022	Michel First Nation	Written contribution to project
December 8, 2022 & February 1, 2023	Keepers of the Water	Legal summit conference; Dialogue about project
March 1, 2023	Elder Delores Cardinal	In person visit about project
March 1, 2023	Elder Clifford Cardinal	In person visit about project
November 17, 2022	Elder Jo-Ann Saddleback	In person circle about project
November 17, 2022	Elder Jerry Saddleback	In person circle about project
November 17, 2022	Elder Carola Cunningham	In person circle about project
November 17, 2022	Elder Daphne Alexis	In person circle about project
November 17, 2022	Elder Arnold Alexis	In person circle about project
February 17, 2023	Elder Tony Arcand	In person circle about project
November 17, 2022	Fernie Marty	In person circle about project
November 17, 2022	Jessica Dion	In person circle about project
November 17, 2022	Kevin Cardinal	In person circle about project
November 17, 2022	Elder Arnold Alexis	In person circle about project
March 24, 2023	Stephanie Tyler, <i>PhD Candidate</i>	Virtual visit about project
March 24, 2023	Kristina Koop, <i>MSW, RSW</i>	Virtual visit about project
March 25, 2023	Elder Leona Makokis, <i>PhD</i>	Virtual visit about project
February 9, 2023 & February 15, 2023	Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement	Dialogue about project
January 26, 2023	Saddle Lake First Nation	Dialogue about project
January 16, 2023	Peavine Métis Settlement	Dialogue about project
January 23, 2023	Alexis First Nation	Dialogue about project
January 27, 2023	Alexander First Nation	Dialogue about project

## **Appendix D: Public/Stakeholder Engagement What We Heard Report - 2023**

# KISISKÂCIWANI-SÎPIY (SWIFT-FLOWING RIVER)

A Heritage River Designation Concept for  
the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta

Stakeholder Engagement

What We Heard Report

April 2023

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# Project Overview

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

A collaborative community initiative, led by Smoky Lake County, has nominated the North Saskatchewan River across Alberta for designation as a Canadian Heritage River. The creation of a Designation Plan will honour and celebrate the river and its people, ensuring greater awareness and collaboration among jurisdictions and river-users to foster sustainable tourism, recreation opportunities, and ecological stewardship.

An engagement process will help ensure this Designation Plan promotes the recognition and celebration of the outstanding natural and cultural values of this iconic river.

Involvement from communities and organizations is essential to better understand, share, and maintain this important river system for generations to come.

## ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

All engagement will aim to be:

- + **Inclusive:** Create a welcoming space for conversation that respects the diverse lived experiences of all participants.
- + **Accessible:** Make it easy to participate and access information. Consider diverse abilities, learning styles, and amount of time required.
- + **Meaningful:** Provide opportunities for participants to share ideas and concerns openly and authentically.
- + **Transparent:** Provide clear information about the process, how decisions are made, and report back on what we heard.
- + **Adaptive:** Be flexible to respond and adapt to the changing needs of participants over the course of the project.

## OVERALL ENGAGEMENT GOALS



The purpose of this engagement is to:

- + Inform potentially interested and affected groups of the designation process underway
- + Make all relevant information about the process readily available to stakeholders
- + Gather meaningful input from a wide range of interests, areas, and partnerships
- + Authentically incorporate insights into the creation of the draft plan
- + Ensure all engagement reporting is clear, concise, and transparent and reflects both qualitative and quantitative information

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

The engagement will be considered successful when:

- + Project awareness has increased, and participants feel well-informed about the process
- + Interested stakeholders feel they had adequate opportunity to contribute
- + Identified stakeholders are active participants throughout the process
- + Stakeholders take on a stewardship role in ongoing work/relationships after the close of this project
- + Project team demonstrates how public input has been considered to develop the draft plan
- + Support gathered from at least 66% of river-adjacent municipalities and Indigenous communities








## PROJECT TIMELINE

The project began in the late summer of 2022, with engagement beginning in earnest in the fall. Informed by this engagement, development of the draft plan began in the spring of 2023, with a second outreach planned for the summer. Presentation to municipal governments will begin in August.



# How We Engaged

Phase 1 Engagement was open for feedback from **October 2022 to February 2023**. To reach a wide range of river stakeholders, a variety of engagement methods and tools were used, ensuring there were multiple avenues to choose from to participate.

RESOURCES	DESCRIPTION	STATS	AUDIENCE	FORMAT
<b>Inform</b>				
	<b>Project Webpage</b> The online hub for all project information. <a href="https://smokylakecounty.ab.ca/m/nsr-heritage-river-chrs">smokylakecounty.ab.ca/m/nsr-heritage-river-chrs</a>		Public	Online
	<b>Direct Emails</b> Direct emails to 236 stakeholder organizations representing diverse communities and interests.		Stakeholder Groups	Online
<b>Engage</b>				
	<b>Online Story Collector Survey</b> The online story collector provided participants with the opportunity to share their unique stories, perspectives, and experiences.	<b>28 survey respondents</b>	Stakeholder Groups	Online/Print
	<b>Interactive Portal &amp; Online Map</b> This website included detailed information about the project as well as an interactive map to collect feedback on the specific reaches.	<b>235 map pins</b>	Stakeholder Groups	Online
	<b>Public &amp; Stakeholder Workshops</b> 2 virtual workshop sessions were held with facilitated small-group discussions. Open to interested groups to register.	<b>14 workshop attendees</b> <b>11 organizations</b>	Stakeholder Groups	Online/ Discussion
	<b>Stakeholder Discussion Guide</b> PDF booklet with key project material and interactive form fields to provide feedback as an organization.	<b>3 guides collected</b>	Stakeholder Groups	Online/Print
	<b>Stakeholder Meetings</b> Meetings with stakeholder groups held upon request.	<b>6 meetings</b>	Stakeholders	Online/ Discussion

# Who We Engaged

As the heritage designation of the North Saskatchewan River is a non-statutory and strictly voluntary process, it is important to learn from the people affected by the river. As such this engagement sought to learn from a diverse range of opinions, experiences, and ways of life, so that a wide spectrum of perspectives are represented in the process.

The insights presented in this What We Heard Report represent the viewpoints of people and organizations who voluntarily selected to participate in engagement. Results are not necessarily representative of the perspectives of all communities who live, work, recreated or are otherwise impacted by the river valley.

TYPE OF GROUP	EXAMPLE GROUPS	ENGAGEMENT PURPOSE/ APPROACH
<p><b>FEDERAL &amp; PROVINCIAL PARTNERS</b></p> <p>Government bodies that have a role in plan implementation</p>	<p>Includes Parks Canada, Alberta Environment and Parks, Alberta Infrastructure, Alberta Municipal Affairs</p>	<p>Gather insights and content and review plan content through one-on-one meetings and/or group workshops.</p>
<p><b>MUNICIPAL STAKEHOLDERS</b></p> <p>Adjacent municipalities whose support is requested and where the river includes their territory.</p>	<p>Alberta Community Partnership (ACP) partners, and those otherwise identified by the County</p>	<p>Utilize existing County relations with each municipality to coordinate groups meetings. Identify select municipalities for one-on-one meetings to improve relations in order to elicit support or to receive more intensive content input and coordination).</p>
<p><b>KEY STAKEHOLDERS</b></p> <p>Key stakeholders that have a direct role in designing the designation and concept plan, funding implementation, and/or content creation.</p>	<p>Includes NSWA, Transalta, EPCOR, Edmonton and Area Land Trust, River Valley Alliance, etc.</p>	<p>Gather insights and content from highly involved groups (e.g. NWSA, EPCOR) and review plan content. Achieve through one-on-one meetings and/or group workshops.</p>
<p><b>COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS (PRIMARY &amp; SECONDARY)</b></p> <p>Groups and organizations that have varying levels of interest</p>	<p>Includes non-profit, user group, advocacy, and business organizations, across categories such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Ecology</li> <li>+ Recreation &amp; Active Living</li> <li>+ Recreation – River-Based</li> <li>+ Heritage &amp; Culture</li> <li>+ Equity-Seeking</li> <li>+ Agriculture</li> <li>+ Industry</li> <li>+ Tourism</li> <li>+ Transportation</li> <li>+ Community Development</li> </ul>	<p>Gather insights from specific perspectives of each organizations and areas of interest. Engagement methods may include online story collecting, interactive mapping, and virtual workshops. Distribute invite to participate to learn about each group's level of interest, capacity, and preferred method. Potential for follow-up to confirm plan content with the interested stakeholders</p>

# Engagement Phases

The bulk of engagement with stakeholders has taken place over Fall/Winter 2022. Follow-up with select stakeholders will occur in Spring 2023, to confirm how findings have been incorporated into the draft North Saskatchewan Heritage Rivers Designation Plan. A final communications strategy at the end of the project will share the plan widely and garner support from partners and the public.

	PHASE PURPOSE	PHASE OUTPUTS
<b>DISCOVERY PHASE</b> <b>FALL 2022</b>	1. Outreach and begin relationship building with stakeholders  2. Learn about the historical and current use of the river, and its importance/value to local communities. Learn about desired future uses of the river and its surrounding lands and what would be required to enable those uses	Data and stories collected from stakeholders to incorporate into the development of the draft plan
<b>CONCEPTION PHASE</b> <b>SPRING 2022</b>	3. Review how data and stories have been incorporated into the draft plan  4. Review language and wording proposed in the draft plan	Final comments received to finalize the plan
<b>DISCOVERY PHASE</b> <b>FALL 2022</b>	5. Share and celebrate the final plan  6. Understand how supportive stakeholders are for the proposed plan	Documentation of support of the plan

# What We Asked

A summary of the types of questions asked during this engagement follows:

WHAT WE ASKED	WHY WE ASKED THIS QUESTION
---------------	----------------------------

<b>STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION GUIDE</b>	
<p>1. What priority programs, projects, or initiatives are you working on, or do you want to see, that this Designation Plan can help advance or support?</p> <p>2. What is a key river insight, or unique information that your organization has to share about the River and thinks we should know to inform a Canadian Heritage Rivers designation?</p> <p>3. How can you and other river users and experts help to steward and celebrate the North Saskatchewan as a Heritage River?</p> <p>4. Are you inspired by any particular songs, music, stories, poetry, or other creative artwork about the North Saskatchewan River?</p> <p>Please feel free to share any stories through this question, instead of, or in addition to, the online story collector and interactive map.</p>	<p>To understand how the river designation can support ongoing effort by stakeholder groups</p>

<b>ONLINE STORY COLLECTOR &amp; INTERACTIVE MAP</b>		
<p>Reach specific spatial comments were collected via an online interactive map tool, allowing participants to place pins on the map, using the prompts:</p>		
<p>1. This place is / was important because...</p> <p>2. More attention is needed here to...</p> <p>3. I wish this was / this could be...</p>		
<p>Sidebar questions also solicited non-spatial personal stories and other feedback, these included:</p>		
<p>A. My story of the river and the surrounding lands in this reach is...</p> <p>B. Are you inspired by any particular songs, music, stories, poetry, or other creative artwork about the North Saskatchewan River in this reach?</p>		<p>To better understand the historic and present day contributions of the river system.</p>

## INTERACTIVE MAP EXAMPLE

**North Saskatchewan Heritage River Engagement**

Please use the following tools to tell us more about the North Saskatchewan River and the surrounding lands, what it means to you, and what you'd like for its future!

*If you'd care to leave your email address, we'd appreciate the opportunity to reach out further as the project develops!*

email address

Reach 2 – Nordegg Bridge to Rocky Mountain House

Reach 2, beginning near Rocky Mountain house, includes Provincial Recreation Areas such as Aylmer, Saunders, Horburg Provincial Recreation Areas. Popular canoe routes through this reach provide important recreational draws, although significant rapids pose challenges and hazards. Provincially designated sensitive wildlife areas include a Key Wildlife and Biodiversity zone which provides a wildlife movement corridor for large mammals. This Reach also contains Critical Habitat for Bull Trout, protected at a federal level under the Fisheries Act. Provincial watercourse classifications include Class C (moderate sensitivity) fish habitat. Historical resources are found along the full extent of this reach with identified values of 3a (Historic Archaeological Site), 4a.p (previously recorded archaeological and palaeontological resources) and 5a (high potential for archaeological resources). Historic site is noted southwest of Rocky Mountain House.

**Instructions**

1. Select a reach from the dropdown box above
2. Click on the button in the upper left of the map
3. Select the general type of comment you'd like to make from the given options
4. Enter a brief comment into the text field and select one or more tags relating to your comment
5. Click SAVE and your comment will appear on the map

*Please use the text boxes below to tell us more about what this reach of the North Saskatchewan River means to you*

Hide Sidebar

Reach 2 – Nordegg Bridge to Rocky Mountain House

Cancel

Please select a type of prompt

- This place is/was important because...
- More attention is needed here to...
- I wish this was/This could be...

Cancel

Reach 1  
Reach 2  
Reach 3  
Reach 4  
Reach 5  
Reach 6  
Reach 7  
Reach 8

Map data powered by Esri, Earthstar Geographics, HERE, Garmin, Swatch, FAO, METI, NASA, USGS, EPA, NRCAN, Parks Canada

# ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

# Overall Summary

During engagement with stakeholder groups, several common themes emerged that will inform how the designation concept is framed and focused.

## ALIGNING RECREATION AND PRESERVATION

Many comments highlighted the need to balance recreation with the preservation of the natural river environment. Concerns around the wake impacts of motorized boats were raised. Many comments highlighted that the river valley has an unrecognized potential as a world-class recreational fishery, including sturgeon and walleye. They also shared concerns about the degradation of fish habitat due to surrounding land use.

### Next Steps:

- + Highlight stretches of the river which provide wilderness experiences
- + Work with landowners to minimize the impact of economic activities on the river system
- + Promote the river as a sport fishery to increase tourism in appropriate areas away from sensitive habitats

## ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY

Many comments highlighted the value that the river valley provides to wildlife, including stories of the impacts that wildlife viewing has had on the experience of river use. The need to preserve and improve the quality of riparian vegetation was highlighted, as well as the need to maintain regional connections through the ravines and creeks which make up the river system.

### Next Steps:

- + Identify and improve riparian health
- + Ensure that regional wildlife connections are identified and preserved

## RIVER ACCESS

Improved river access was identified as a critical need throughout much of the river system. Old ferry crossings, bridges, and private lands were flagged as important potential areas for this access. Safe hand-launches and bail-out points were raised as an important consideration in enabling increased recreational use of the river. Balancing motorized access with the need to preserve the feeling of wilderness while on the river was also highlighted. The need for emergency vehicle access was also raised. In the surrounding lands, there is a need for improved staging areas for recreational use of all types, to ensure that viewpoints, parking, and camping can be done safely and with the comfort of visitors in mind.

### Next Steps:

- + Identify long stretches of the river where bail-out points would improve the safe and flexible use of the river
- + Work with Alberta Transportation and private land owners to develop new access points
- + Balance motorized access to preserve the wilderness experience

## CAMPING OPPORTUNITIES

Along with river access, camping opportunities along the river were also seen as key aspects for increased use of the river. Improved campsites on islands was desired. Concerns about camping in sensitive ecosystems were also raised, along with the need to balance the feeling of wilderness and serenity with recreational uses.

### Next Steps:

- + Identify appropriate areas for new campsites that avoid sensitive ecosystems
- + Ensure campsites are well maintained to avoid degradation

## STEWARDSHIP

Many expressed the desire for river stewardship initiatives, including river clean-up, inventories, storytelling, and improved understanding of the river system.

### Next Steps:

- + Provide educational opportunities for communities to learn about the river and its adjacent lands to help potential stewards find an element about the river that they can connect with
- + Explore opportunities for citizen science initiatives to allow people to share their knowledge and improve the overall understanding of this river system
- + Highlight areas of the river in need of clean-up efforts

## WATER QUALITY

Many comments highlighted the need to preserve water quality, sharing concerns about the impacts of mining, agriculture, forestry, industrial activity, and urban refuse on the experience of the river. People also shared stories of their use of water from the river for drinking, play, and for fishing.

### Next Steps:

- + Highlight the need to share information about water quality and how it varies across each reach
- + Communicate ways in which the impacts of actions on the land impacts the water quality of the river
- + Provide opportunities to learn about why the areas next to and influenced by water are important for the health of both the water and the land
- + Develop an interest in the activities that clean water supports

## INDIGENOUS RECOGNITION

Many participants identified the importance of Indigenous knowledge and stewardship in the lands and waters of the North Saskatchewan. There was a desire to see Indigenous history and culture acknowledged and shared, to see creation of Indigenous cultural gathering places, and to see special protection afforded to sites and natural features that are central to Indigenous teachings and cultural practices.

### Next Steps:

- + We will continue to develop a persistent and ongoing outreach with Indigenous Nations and Communities to understand their priorities for the River Valley, and how they would like to be involved in place-making and stewardship
- + We will include opportunities to protect culturally significant places, create cultural gathering places and share important histories

## GRASSROOTS SOLUTIONS

Some people raised concerns about the impacts the designation process may have on their own way of life, or their ability to self-govern. Concerns were raised about increased transparency, government control, and the desire to see their own grassroots efforts lead actions in their own communities.

### Next Steps:

- + Work to highlight grassroots initiatives to support the work of the people who know the river best
- + Ensure that regional efforts are transparent and well-informed to avoid over-reach and relieve concerns of the intent of these efforts
- + Amplify local voices to develop collective support for the objectives of river-using communities



# Project Study Area Boundaries

While the designation will be restricted to the river itself, the study area for engagement follows from a 5-km buffer around the riverbed. This was selected to allow for stakeholder input on the recreational, cultural, and ecological heritage of the surrounding landscape.

## River Reaches

As the nominated portion of the North Saskatchewan River is so far-reaching, the decision was made to partition the study area into 8 reaches, each comprising a 2–3 day float through relatively similar conditions. These reaches were then used to guide engagement input, ensuring that people were easily able to orient themselves, and focus their attention on the areas they know best. These reaches include:

- + Reach 1 – Banff to Abraham Lake
- + Reach 2 – Nordegg Bridge to Rocky Mountain House
- + Reach 3 – Rocky Mountain House to Drayton Valley
- + Reach 4 – Drayton Valley to the Highway 770 Bridge
- + Reach 5 – Highway 770 Bridge to Edmonton
- + Reach 6 – Edmonton to Pakan
- + Reach 7 – Pakan to Elk Point
- + Reach 8 – Elk Point to Alberta Border

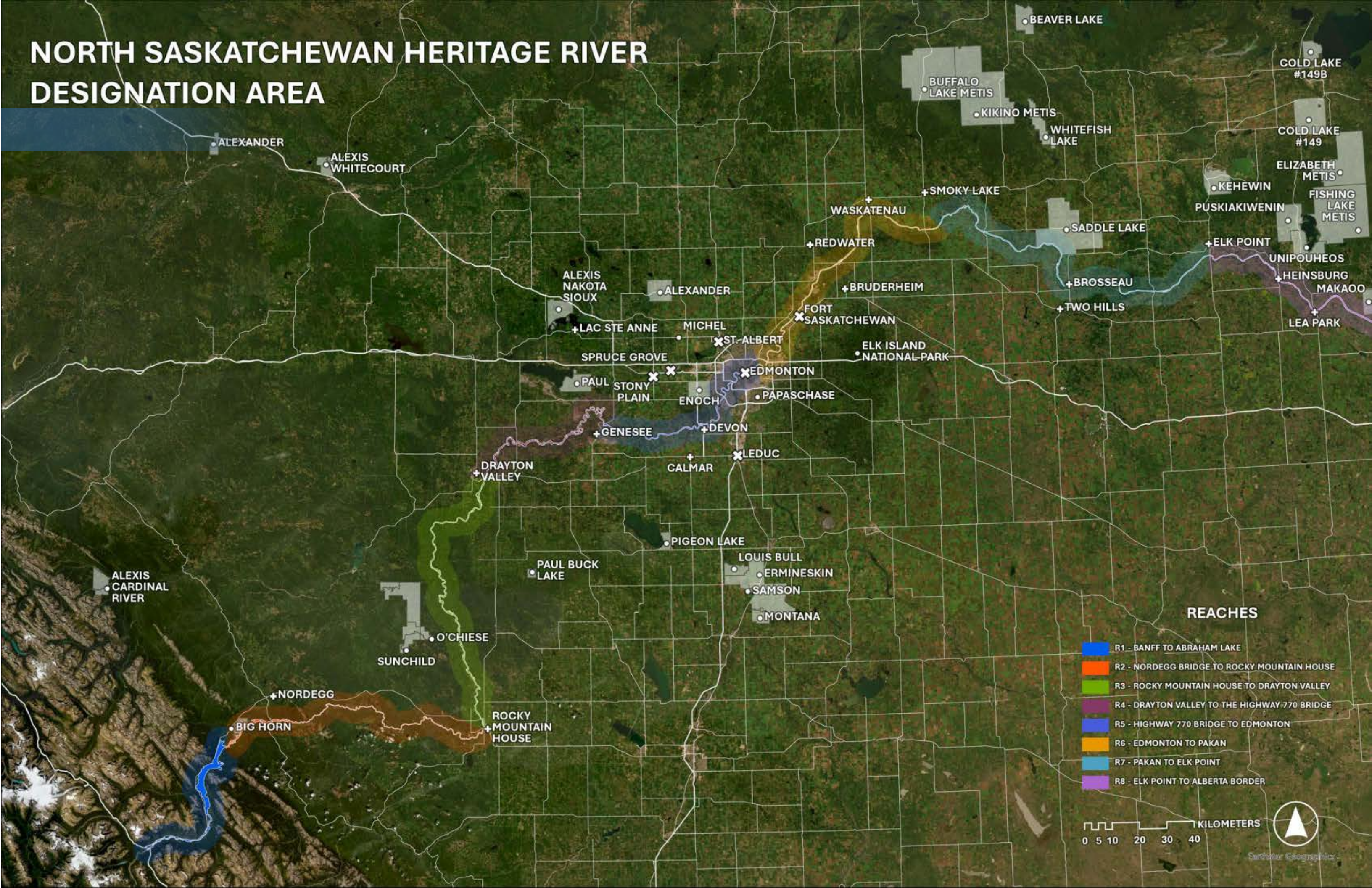
The following pages include a summary of findings for each reach.

# Comment Classification

During the synthesis of engagement comments, a number of overarching themes were identified, allowing comments to be classified according to a range of types. These types include:

- + Scenic value
- + Historic resource
- + Interpretive potential
- + Protected area
- + Tourism opportunity
- + Access
- + Natural feature
- + Development
- + Service
- + Economic use
- + Recreation opportunity
- + Infrastructure need
- + Concern

# NORTH SASKATCHEWAN HERITAGE RIVER DESIGNATION AREA



- ### REACHES
- R1 - BANFF TO ABRAHAM LAKE
  - R2 - NORDEGG BRIDGE TO ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE
  - R3 - ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE TO DRAYTON VALLEY
  - R4 - DRAYTON VALLEY TO THE HIGHWAY 770 BRIDGE
  - R5 - HIGHWAY 770 BRIDGE TO EDMONTON
  - R6 - EDMONTON TO PAKAN
  - R7 - PAKAN TO ELK POINT
  - R8 - ELK POINT TO ALBERTA BORDER



# Reach 1

## COMMENT SUMMARY

### Reach 1 – Banff to Abraham Lake

Reach 1 begins in Banff National Park, a national protected area, and intersects Provincial Parks and Recreation areas as well, including Thompson Creek Provincial Rec Area, Kootenay Plains Provincial Rec Area, and Douglas Fir Natural Area. The David Thompson highway affords easy access to staging areas throughout this reach, and additional public recreational infrastructure is being developed today. Abraham Lake is an iconic tourist draw to this area throughout the year, including frozen methane bubbles popular with photographers. Summer use of the lake poses hazards due to high winds, leading to frequent emergency responses. The lake itself has been developed due to the construction of a hydroelectric dam at the eastern edge of the lake, an important economic contributor to the province.

First Nations Lands include the Stoney Nakoda First Nation, northeast of Abraham Lake. There are numerous provincially designated environmentally sensitive areas in Reach 1 including ranges for Grizzly Bears, Caribou, Mountain Goats/ Sheep, and Threatened Plant Species, providing unique habitat for a diverse range of species. The North Saskatchewan River and associated tributaries also provide Critical Habitat for Bull Trout, protected at a federal level under the Fisheries Act. Provincial watercourse classifications include Class A (highest sensitivity) and Class C (moderate sensitivity) fish habitat. Historical resources are found along the full extent this reach with identified values of 4a,c, (previously recorded cultural and archaeological resources) and 5a (high potential for archaeological resources). Cultural occurrences are noted northeast of Abraham Lake.

#### ACCESS

- + Cline River Heliport is an important existing access for back-country experiences

#### SERVICES

- + Minimal services in this area

#### SCENIC QUALITY

- + Iconic views of David Thompson Country
- + Very beautiful views throughout this reach
- + River views from the highway however narrow roads and blind corners
- + Suspension bridge over the North Saskatchewan River
- + Nearby Crescent Falls is beautiful when the river is high
- + Siffleur Falls
- + Preacher's Point methane bubbles!

#### HERITAGE VALUES

- + Monument to Canadian Airborne Forces

#### RECREATIONAL VALUES

- + Lots of Bouldering / Rock Climbing / Ice Climbing opportunities throughout this area
- + Great lake fishing when the water is low

#### NATURAL VALUES

- + Kootenay Plains Ecological Reserve

#### ECONOMIC VALUES

- + Numerous existing guiding operations in this area
- + Abraham Lake / Transalta operations
- + Forestry operations

#### TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

- + Guided backcountry experiences
- + Multi-day connections from foothills parkland into Banff and beyond

#### INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES

- + David Thompson history

#### INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

- + Banff Park needs to be a willing partner in connecting the Glacier Trail to highway 93. It isn't cleared and there is a lack of willingness to see it completed
- + Offer visitor-focused amenities such as comfort camping, kitchen shelters, hiker/ biker sites
- + The Topham Suspension bridge is slowly failing at the east in-river tower due to erosion and should be repaired
- + Enable year-round recreation through infrastructure improvements to aging sites
- + Improved parking and washroom facilities at staging areas

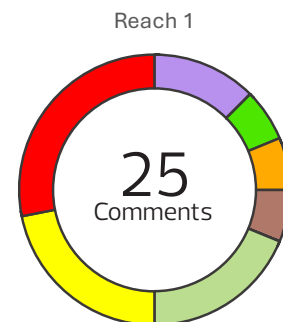
#### CONCERNS

- + Methane bubbles – presumably Abraham Lake is a significant source of greenhouse gases
- + Does the dam allow for fish passage? Does the lake provide suitable habitat for fish?
- + Reduce vehicle and non-Indigenous use of this area
- + Often sheep on road
- + Better vehicle pullouts are needed to allow people to view the scenery safely
- + OHV management in this area is improving, but is still resulting in significant impacts. Additional restrictions to reduce noise and surface impacts
- + Noise and impacts from heli-site
- + Non-motorized boats can get pushed into the lake by the wind, requiring rescue

My story of the river and the surrounding lands in this reach is...

"... personally memorable, but utterly insignificant in comparison to the losses of the Indigenous peoples of the area from the building of the highway and Bighorn Dam. All features and locations of this area should be renamed with their Indigenous names."

### Comment Classification Summary



# R1 - BANFF TO ABRAHAM LAKE



- Access
- Concern
- Development
- Economic
- Historic
- Infrastructure Need
- Interpretive
- Natural Feature
- Protected
- Recreation
- Scenic
- Service
- Tourism

0 0.75 1.5 3 4.5 6 KILOMETERS



Earthstar Geographics

\* Overlapping comment point locations have been shifted slightly to ensure legibility

# Reach 2

## COMMENT SUMMARY

### Reach 2 – Nordegg Bridge to Rocky Mountain House

Reach 2, beginning near Rocky Mountain house, includes Provincial Recreation Areas such as Aylmer, Saunders, Horburg Provincial Recreation Areas. Popular canoe routes through this reach provide important recreational draws, although significant rapids pose challenges and hazards. Provincially designated sensitive wildlife areas include a Key Wildlife and Biodiversity zone which provides a wildlife movement corridor for large mammals. This Reach also contains Critical Habitat for Bull Trout, protected at a federal level under the Fisheries Act. Provincial watercourse classifications include Class C (moderate sensitivity) fish habitat. Historical resources are found along the full extent of this reach with identified values of 3a (Historic Archaeological Site), 4a,p (previously recorded archaeological and palaeontological resources) and 5a (high potential for archaeological resources). Historic site is noted southwest of Rocky Mountain House.

#### ACCESS

- + Additional river put ins would be desirable.

#### SERVICES

- + Nordegg is a key service hub

#### SCENIC QUALITY

- + Beautiful rapids and river confluences
- + Wilderness areas

#### HERITAGE VALUES

- + Former Phoenix Ferry
- + Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site

#### NATURAL VALUES

- + Brierlies Rapids
- + Devils Elbow
- + Clearwater River and Bighorn River confluences

#### ECONOMIC VALUES

- + Forestry operations have been a significant economic input

#### TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

- + A world class river paddling route if Alberta Parks and/or the county stepped in to facilitate good services
- + Group camping at Aylmer PRA
- + Existing guided recreation opportunities

#### INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES

- + Natural heritage and connections to the river
- + Economic developments and historic impacts

#### INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

- + Build some riverside paddling campsites that are sustainable
- + Improve the self-propelled trail opportunities on south side of river

#### CONCERNS

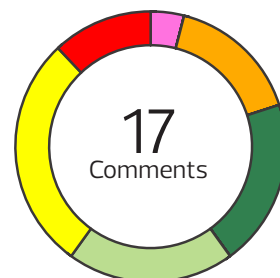
- + Limit noisy jetboats
- + Limit coal, mineral and O/G activity in eastern slopes
- + Manage noise from use and surroundings along full stretch of river. Jet boats, compressors, highway noises etc. can be remarkably persistent for full reach from this segment to the border
- + Watch OHV degradation in PLUZ. Do not allow unsustainable trail use, but enable trail activities that are low impact and can be managed

My story of the river and the surrounding lands in this reach is...

"I first paddled this reach 50 years ago, and it is the premier 3-5 day canoe trip in Alberta: the water is challenging in places, the scenery spectacular, the on-stream camping is very good and it is accessible."

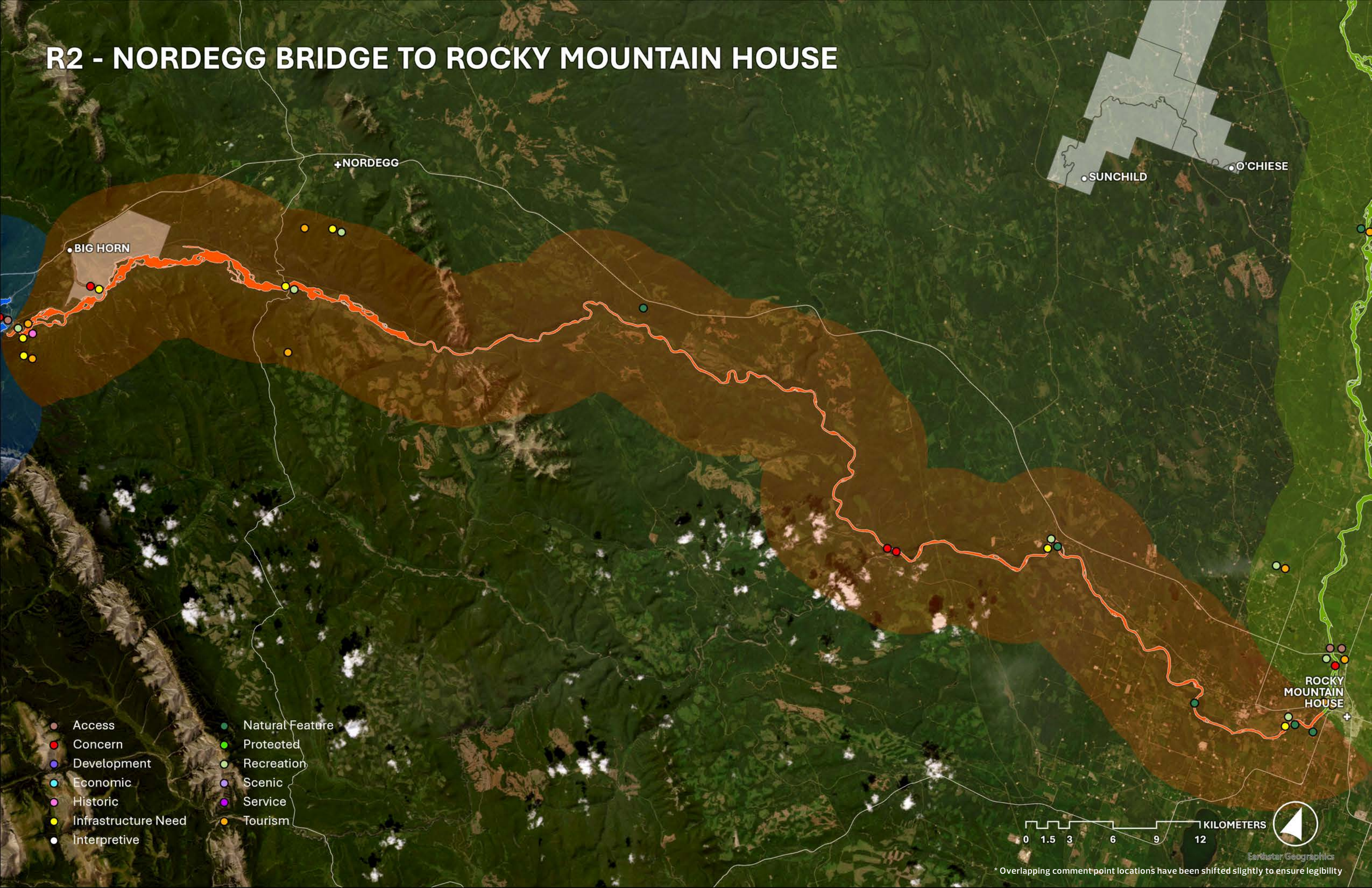
### Comment Classification Summary

Reach 2

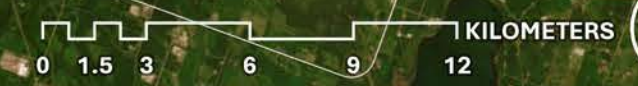


- scenic
- tourism
- service
- concern
- historic
- access
- economic
- interpretive
- natural feature
- recreation
- protected
- development
- infrastructure need

# R2 - NORDEGG BRIDGE TO ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE



- Access
- Concern
- Development
- Economic
- Historic
- Infrastructure Need
- Interpretive
- Natural Feature
- Protected
- Recreation
- Scenic
- Service
- Tourism



Earthstar Geographics

\* Overlapping comment point locations have been shifted slightly to ensure legibility

# Reach 3

## COMMENT SUMMARY

### Reach 3 – Rocky Mountain House to Drayton Valley

Reach 3 encompasses the area stretching from Rocky Mountain House to Drayton Valley and includes Provincial Protected Areas such as the Mill Island Natural Area. Lack of easy public access to the river through this reach results in quiet natural river experiences. Beautiful white sand beaches and numerous islands provide idyllic recreational opportunities. Extensive historical exploration, fur trading, logging, and settlement through this area provides interpretive opportunities and tourism potential.

First Nations lands include the O'Chiese First Nation and Sunchild First Nation. Provincially designated sensitive wildlife areas include a Key Wildlife and Biodiversity zone which provides a wildlife movement corridor for large mammals. This Reach also contains Critical Habitat for Bull Trout, protected at a federal level under the Fisheries Act. Provincial watercourse classifications include Class C (moderate sensitivity) fish habitat. Historical resources are found along the full extent of this reach with identified values of 4a,p (previously recorded archaeological and palaeontological resources) and 5a,p (high potential for archaeological and palaeontological resources).

#### ACCESS

- + Well-used river access points

#### SERVICES

- + Rocky Mountain House and Drayton Valley provide services

#### SCENIC QUALITY

- + Steep banks of the river provide isolation and a wilderness setting

#### HERITAGE VALUES

- + Boggy Hill was a staging area for David Thompson

#### RECREATIONAL VALUES

- + Fishing and river floating
- + Camping along the river
- + Former site of the Motion Notion festival

#### NATURAL VALUES

- + Brazeau and Baptise River confluences
- + Sand beaches along the river

#### TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

- + Camping at Crimson Lake and Brazeau Reservoir
- + 3 counties touch in this reach
- + The Cowboy Trail passes through this reach
- + The North Saskatchewan River Park & Rodeo Grounds

#### CONCERNS

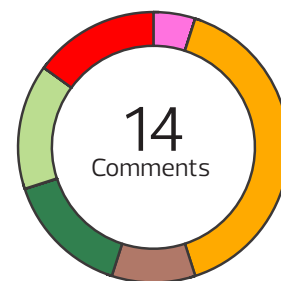
- + Industrial impacts along the river have made a mess

My story of the river and the surrounding lands in this reach is...

"I first paddled this reach in on an overnight weekend trip some 51 yrs ago. It is a fine wilderness paddle in the middle section, and it offers good back country camping, and often good wildlife watching."

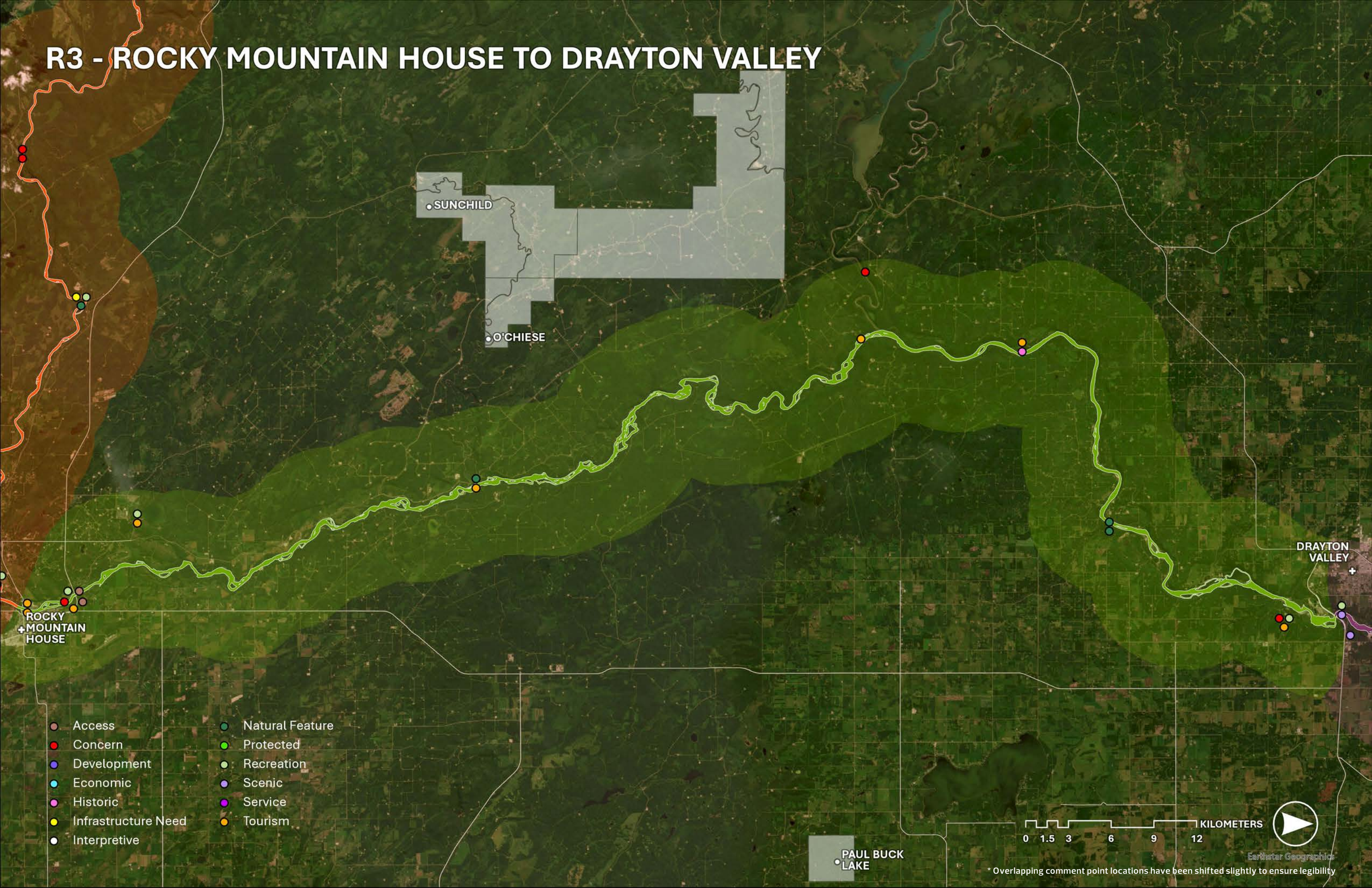
### Comment Classification Summary

Reach 3



- |           |            |                   |                       |
|-----------|------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| ■ scenic  | ■ historic | ■ interpretive    | ■ protected           |
| ■ tourism | ■ access   | ■ natural feature | ■ development         |
| ■ service | ■ economic | ■ recreation      | ■ infrastructure need |
| ■ concern |            |                   |                       |

# R3 - ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE TO DRAYTON VALLEY



SUNCHILD

O'CHIESE

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

DRAYTON VALLEY

PAUL BUCK LAKE

- Access
- Concern
- Development
- Economic
- Historic
- Infrastructure Need
- Interpretive
- Natural Feature
- Protected
- Recreation
- Scenic
- Service
- Tourism

0 1.5 3 6 9 12 KILOMETERS



\* Overlapping comment point locations have been shifted slightly to ensure legibility



# Reach 4

## COMMENT SUMMARY

### Reach 4 – Drayton Valley to the Highway 770 Bridge

*This stretch of the river has extensive cultural, natural, and recreational values, including prehistoric settlements, evidence of Indigenous westward migration, and European fur trading, mining, and settlement. In recent decades white sand beaches have been the site of numerous festivals and recreational gatherings. Today, the isolated natural riparian lands provide important tourism potential.*

*Reach 4 includes Provincial Protected Areas such as St. Francis Natural Area and Genesee Natural Area. Just north of the North Saskatchewan River is the Paul First Nation, adjacent to Wabamun Lake. Provincially designated sensitive wildlife areas include a Key Wildlife and Biodiversity zone which provides a wildlife movement corridor for large mammals, as well as a sensitive raptor range for Bald Eagles, and a Sharp-tailed grouse survey area. Provincial watercourse classifications include Class C (moderate sensitivity) fish habitat. The reach does not contain federally designated critical fish habitat. Historical resources are found along the full extent of this reach with identified values of 4a (previously recorded archaeological resources) and 5 a, p (high potential for archaeological and palaeontological resources).*

#### ACCESS

- + Numerous river access points

#### SERVICES

- + Drayton Valley services

#### SCENIC QUALITY

- + Stunning cliffs

#### HERITAGE VALUES

- + Gold panning
- + Former Berrymoor Ferry crossing

#### RECREATIONAL VALUES

- + Nordic skiing areas
- + Fantastic wildlife viewing
- + Fishing

#### NATURAL VALUES

- + Nationally significant bird area
- + Very important Burtonsville area should be a national urban park

#### ECONOMIC VALUES

- + Substantial aggregate extraction areas

#### TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

- + Campgrounds
- + Guided river trips

#### INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES

- + Lac St. Anne is a spiritual site
- + HBC Buck Lake House
- + Nelson House
- + Fort Whitemud
- + First Nations

#### INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

- + Hand launch, non-motorized camping on all major islands

#### CONCERNS

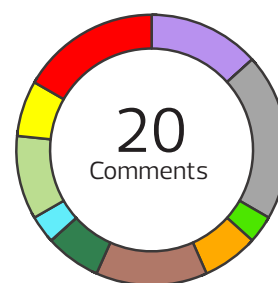
- + The environmental intactness of the north Saskatchewan river in this area is vulnerable as threatened by urbanization pressures and Parkland County development
- + Safer, easier river access needed

My story of the river and the surrounding lands in this reach is...

"Over the past 40 years I have paddled this reach often, the lower sections with university classes, my scout troop and the canoe club. For many years I was the steward for the Burtonsville Island Natural area, within itself offers many activities."

Comment Classification Summary

Reach 4



- scenic
- tourism
- service
- concern
- historic
- access
- economic
- interpretive
- natural feature
- recreation
- protected
- development
- infrastructure need

# R4 - DRAYTON VALLEY TO THE HIGHWAY 770 BRIDGE

PAUL

GENESEE

DRAYTON VALLEY

- Access
- Concern
- Development
- Economic
- Historic
- Infrastructure Need
- Interpretive
- Natural Feature
- Protected
- Recreation
- Scenic
- Service
- Tourism



Blazeau County, Parkland County, Maxar  
\* Overlapping comment point locations have been shifted slightly to ensure legibility

## COMMENT SUMMARY

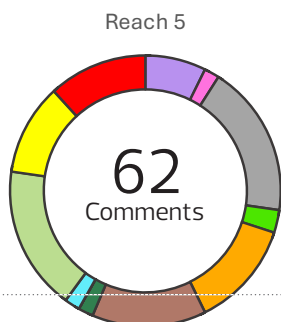
### Reach 5 – Highway 770 Bridge to Edmonton

Reach 5 includes the area surrounding the City of Edmonton in the capital region of the province. This reach sees the greatest total visitation from surrounding communities and tourism operations. First Nations lands include the Enoch Cree Nation. Provincially designated sensitive wildlife areas include a Key Wildlife and Biodiversity zone which provides a wildlife movement corridor for large mammals, as well as a sensitive raptor range for Bald Eagles, and a Sharp-tailed grouse survey area. Provincial watercourse classifications include Class A (highest sensitivity) and Class C (moderate sensitivity) fish habitat and does not contain federally designated critical fish habitat. Historical resources are found along the full extent of this reach with identified values of 4a (previously recorded archaeological resources) and 5a,p (high potential for archaeological and palaeontological resources). An additional provincial park has been proposed around the Big Island area in the southwest of the city lands, which is undergoing public engagement.

My story of the river and the surrounding lands in this reach is...

"I have canoed and picked up lots of garbage floating and stranded on this river. We are lucky to have it and wish that we could do more to protect it."

Comment Classification Summary



- scenic
- tourism
- service
- concern
- historic
- access
- economic
- interpretive
- natural feature
- recreation
- protected
- development
- infrastructure need

#### ACCESS

- + Constable Chelsea Park is a key public river access/egress. However the access road can be muddy and steep
- + Formalized hand launches are needed in busy areas
- + Devon Boat launch is a starting point for a lot of canoe and paddling adventures
- + Prospector's Point is a key access
- + Edmonton River Lot 1

#### SERVICES

- + A key staging area for river use

#### SCENIC QUALITY

- + Devon Cliffs shows layers of geological history
- + The Terrwilligar and Fort Edmonton footbridges provides river views
- + New Walterdale Bridge is an iconic Edmonton view
- + The Legislature
- + Some impressive log jams have been on the river for a decade or more
- + The Wolf Willow Stairs are iconic

#### HERITAGE VALUES

- + Former Holburn Ferry
- + Former Town of Jasper Place
- + Big Island provincial park has significant history
- + The Edmonton Queen riverboat
- + Gold panning
- + Ravines separate Devon and Edmonton boundaries

#### RECREATIONAL VALUES

- + Trails in the Coates Conservation Area
- + Extensive informal mountain bike trails in Edmonton
- + The 100km trail of the River Valley Alliance has significant recreational potential
- + Tippy Hippy camping
- + Lots of wildlife and rec opportunities (e.g. easier non-motorized float access from Edmonton)
- + Very popular unsanctioned walking, running, MTB and fatbike trails. All season.
- + Rabbit Hill Waterski Area

#### NATURAL VALUES

- + Coates Conservation Area, nature preserve, dinosaur bones found here
- + Whitemud Creek is an important wildlife corridor
- + Big Island provincial park should be left alone to maintain its ecological integrity

#### ECONOMIC VALUES

- + Major power generation area – coal mining and water cooling

#### TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

- + EPCOR Riverwatch
- + Improved river access at Rossdale could make this an increased tourism draw in the region
- + New National Urban Park provides important opportunities

#### INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES

- + Geological history of the North Saskatchewan
- + The 100km trail of the River Valley Alliance has significant interpretive potential
- + The Walterdale area has significant indigenous history, including grave-sites.
- + Erosional sites resulted in houses falling into the river. An important reminder to not build your house along the erosional edge of a river
- + End of the world. Former Kellior road – showing the erosional force of the NSR
- + Nearby Big Lake and Lois Hole Provincial Park

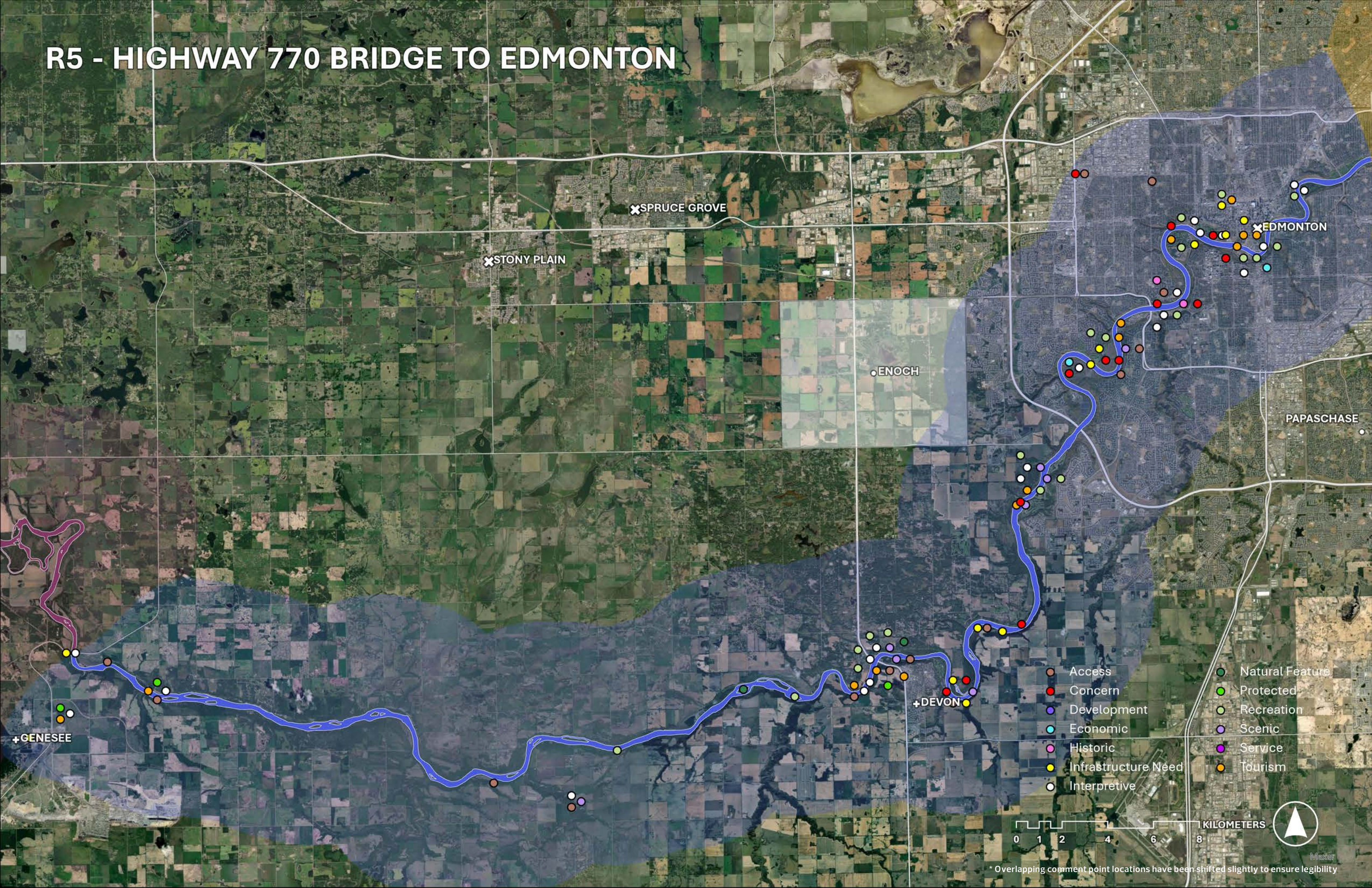
#### INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

- + Greater non-motorized river access and potentially camping

#### CONCERNS

- + Do not permit commercial activities at the boat launches
- + Gold course runoff affects water quality
- + Jet boats ruin the river experience along this and other stretches. Much more attention is needed to regulating noise and wake
- + Wake from boats impacts unstable banks
- + Concerns around dog impacts to the river and surrounding natural areas
- + Water treatment intakes pose safety risks

# R5 - HIGHWAY 770 BRIDGE TO EDMONTON



- Access
- Concern
- Development
- Economic
- Historic
- Infrastructure Need
- Interpretive
- Natural Feature
- Protected
- Recreation
- Scenic
- Service
- Tourism



\* Overlapping comment point locations have been shifted slightly to ensure legibility

## COMMENT SUMMARY

### Reach 6 – Edmonton to Pakan

Reach 6 includes the areas northeast of Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan, up to Smoky Creek. Provincial Protected areas include the Redwater Natural Area. These lands have seen extensive historical and present day use as industrial areas, and significant water licenses granted for economic activities. These industries have acted as important drivers for the development of central Alberta over the past century, but have resulted in disturbances that exist to this day.

Provincially designated sensitive wildlife areas include a Key Wildlife and Biodiversity zone which provides a wildlife movement corridor for large mammals, as well as a sensitive raptor range for Bald Eagles, and a Sharp-tailed grouse survey area. A Great Blue Heron Colonial Nesting Bird area is identified where Beaverhill Creek enters the North Saskatchewan River. Provincial watercourse classifications include Class C (moderate sensitivity) fish habitat and does not contain federally designated critical fish habitat. Historical resources are found along the full extent of this reach with identified values of 4a (previously recorded archaeological resources) and 5a,p (high potential for archaeological and palaeontological resources).

### ACCESS

- + Public access at Fort Victoria aka Pakan, former ferry crossing
- + Former steamboat landing (on private land)
- + 'The Fishing Hole', private river access (the landowner sometimes gives permission)

### SERVICES

- + Fort Saskatchewan

### SCENIC QUALITY

- + Incredible trees through stretches of this reach
- + Iconic 'House in the Middle of the Road' visible from river

### HERITAGE VALUES

- + Extensive fur trading and European settlements

### RECREATIONAL VALUES

- + Camping opportunities
- + Fort Saskatchewan has a valued mountain bike trail network
- + Fishing
- + Future Strathcona County Regional Park

### NATURAL VALUES

- + Gold Bar Delta (only delta on the North Saskatchewan River)
- + Red Water Natural Area
- + Sturgeon River, Redwater River, Waskatenau Creek confluences
- + Nearby Beaverhills Creek Biosphere Reserve
- + Connections to Elk Island National Park

### ECONOMIC VALUES

- + Alberta Industrial Heartland and Designated Industrial Zone
- + Nutrien Fertilizer Plant
- + Tourism and river guiding
- + Major aggregate extraction

### TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

- + Lions campground

### INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES

- + Historic Old Fort Trail and Victoria Trail
- + Victoria Park cemetery
- + Former Bears Ears reserve
- + Fort Augustus
- + Former Fort Edmonton
- + NWMP Fort Saskatchewan (built in 1875)
- + Victoria District National Historic Sites and River Lots
- + Métis Crossing Cultural Gathering Center
- + EPCOR public relations and education programs
- + Remote cameras
- + Skaro Shrine
- + Plaque site

### INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

- + River Island should be improved for camping! Great mid-way point from Fort Sask to Métis Crossing

### CONCERNS

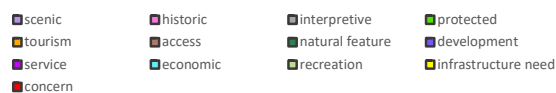
- + Ensure connectivity between the river and the creeks
- + Astotin Creek connection to Beaverhills Creek and the river, lacking connectivity

My story of the river and the surrounding lands in this reach is...

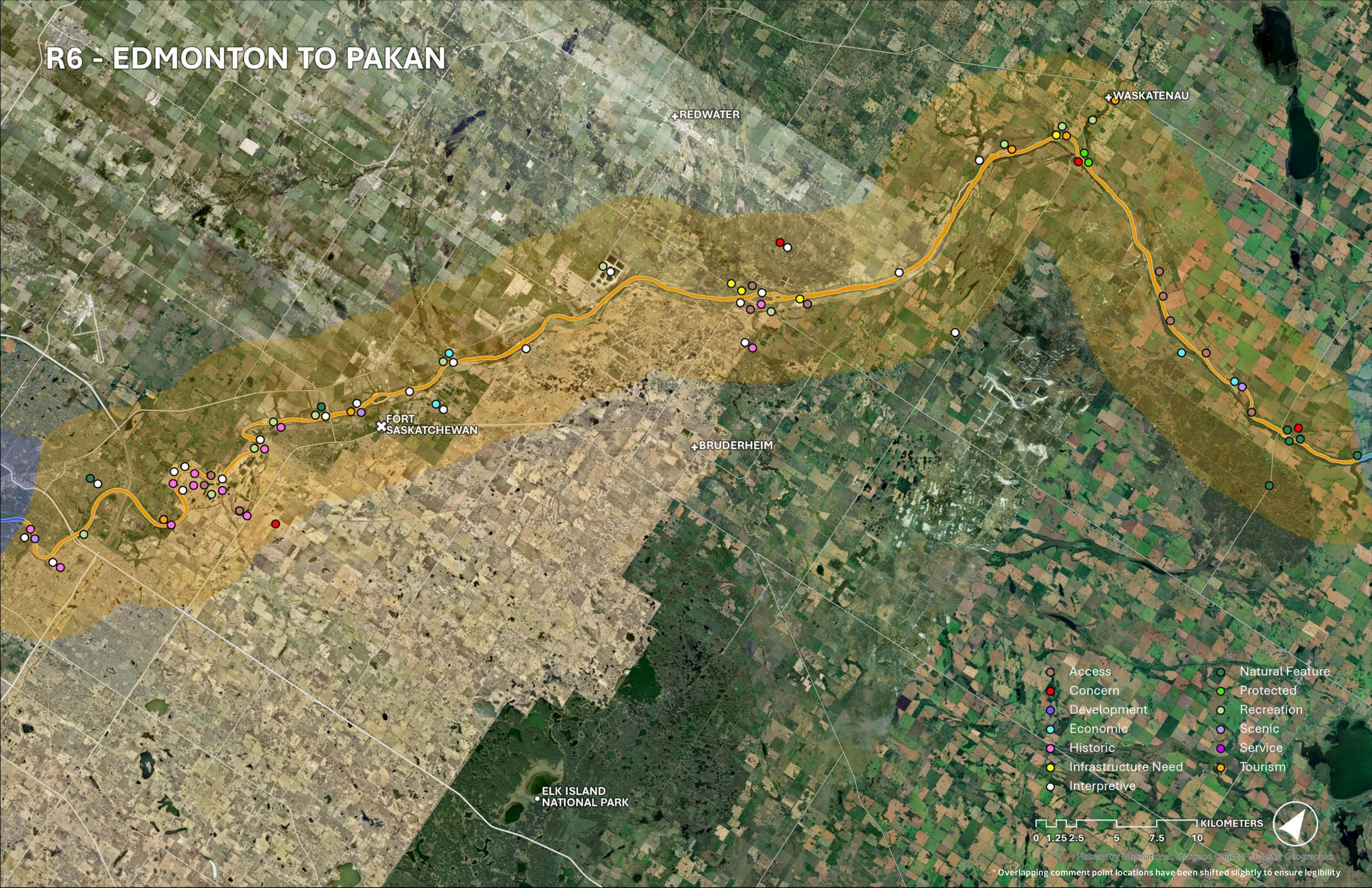
"In the spring of 1875 construction began at Fort Saskatchewan under Inspector William D. Jarvis. The Fort was originally referred to by some at the time as "Sturgeon Creek Post," and by the Cree as "Si-ma-gan-is" meaning "Soldier's House." During the winter of 1874-75 at Fort Edmonton, people of the settlement came to Inspector Jarvis "... to demand that the barracks should be built at Edmonton. They did not use much tact, and they were trying to coerce the wrong man. ... I have no doubt that if the settlers had let him alone he would have built the new post on the opposite side of the river. As it was, he chose a position 20 miles east, where he thought there would be a good railway crossing." Samuel B. Steele"

### Comment Classification Summary

Reach 6



# R6 - EDMONTON TO PAKAN



+REDWATER

+WASKATENAU

FORT SASKATCHEWAN

+BRUDERHEIM

ELK ISLAND NATIONAL PARK

- Access
- Concern
- Development
- Economic
- Historic
- Infrastructure Need
- Interpretive
- Natural Feature
- Protected
- Recreation
- Scenic
- Service
- Tourism



Photometry International, Sturgeon County, Earthstar Geographics  
\* Overlapping comment point locations have been shifted slightly to ensure legibility

## COMMENT SUMMARY

### Reach 7 – Pakan to Elk Point

Reach 7 is centered around the Saddle Lake First Nation. Several Alberta Conservation Association sites are identified including Spruce Hills, Aspen Hills, North River, Stoney Lake, and Death River. Provincially designated sensitive wildlife areas include a Key Wildlife and Biodiversity zone which provides a wildlife movement corridor for large mammals. Provincial watercourse classifications include Class C (moderate sensitivity) fish habitat and does not contain federally designated critical fish habitat. Historical resources are found along the full extent of this reach with identified values of 4a (previously recorded archaeological resources) and 5a,p (high potential for archaeological and palaeontological resources).

#### ACCESS

- + Old ferry crossings could be new river access points

#### SERVICES

- + Elk point is an important service center, including a hospital and airport

#### HERITAGE VALUES

- + Old settlements and forts

#### NATURAL VALUES

- + Bellis Natural Area
- + Smoky Creek and White Earth Creek confluences

#### ECONOMIC VALUES

- + Alberta Seed Improvement Center
- + Major aggregate extraction

#### TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

- + Northern Lights RV Resort

#### INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES

- + Saddle Lake Cree Nation Reserve
- + Former Carlton Trail
- + Former Fort White Earth (aka Edmonton House III)
- + Peter Fiddler Peace Park and Statue

#### INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

- + Additional river access locations
- + More connected trails

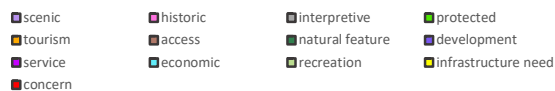
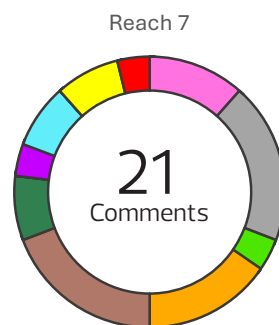
#### CONCERNS

- + The river should have great fishing but its the least producing out of all the rivers vs the Bow or Athabasca.
- + Existing river access under bridges are often very steep and difficult to exit from.

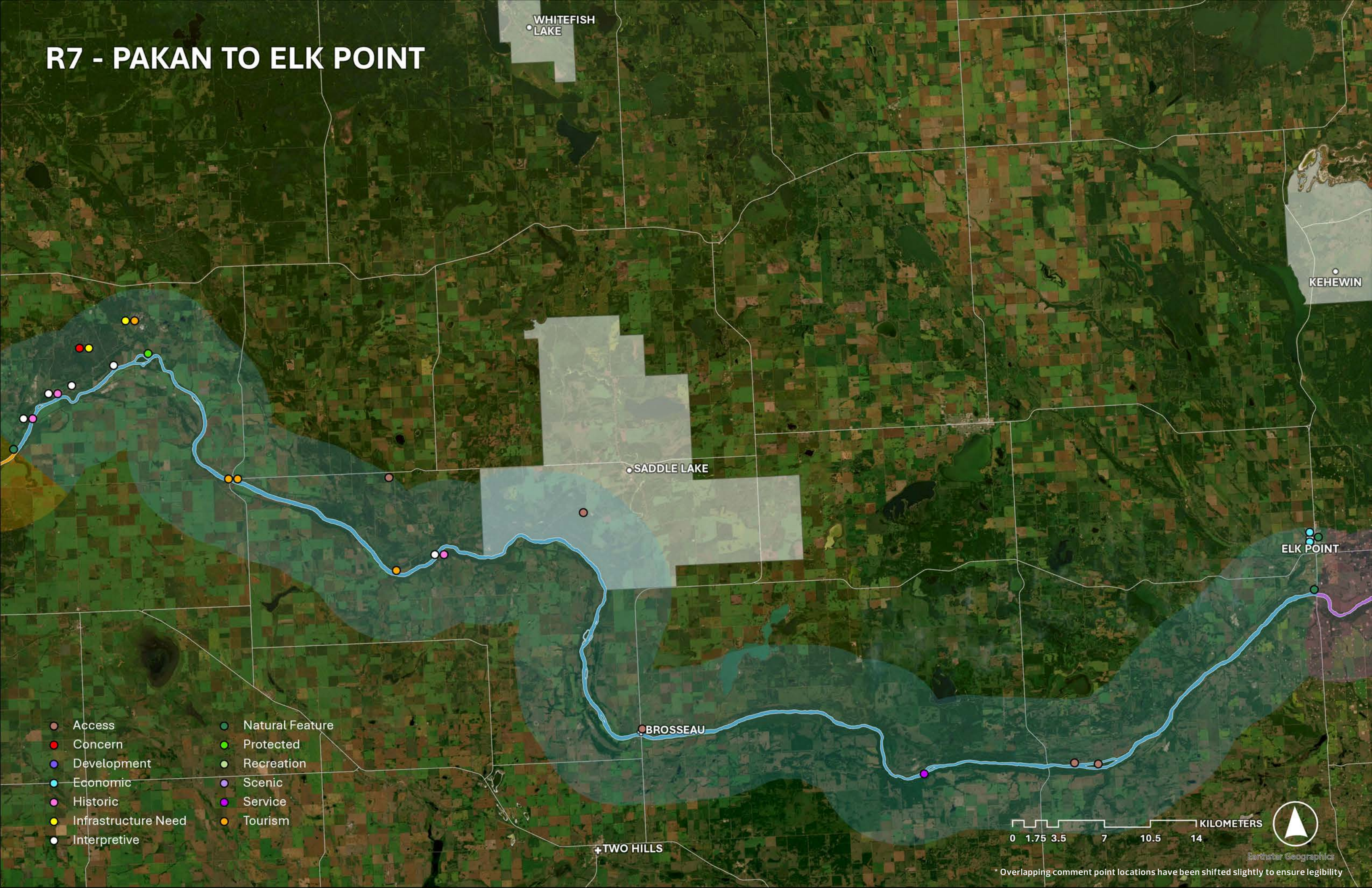
Are you inspired by any particular songs, music, stories, poetry, or other creative artwork about the North Saskatchewan River in this reach?

“As a child we listened to many sacred stories and marriage stories. Women from different areas would be transported through the river system (canoe) to join men. One story stands out is a Pasquyak story (this family name is where my late mom originates from family wise) men (who lived near the old creamery south west of the reserve) would meet their new wife. This period of wife transport was practiced before the treaty period when Saddle Lake was a district.”

Comment Classification Summary



# R7 - PAKAN TO ELK POINT



WHITEFISH LAKE

KEHEWIN

SADDLE LAKE

ELK POINT

BROSSEAU

TWO HILLS

- Access
- Concern
- Development
- Economic
- Historic
- Infrastructure Need
- Interpretive
- Natural Feature
- Protected
- Recreation
- Scenic
- Service
- Tourism



\* Overlapping comment point locations have been shifted slightly to ensure legibility



# Reach 8

## COMMENT SUMMARY

### Reach 8 – Elk Point to Alberta Border

Reach 8 ends at the Alberta/Saskatchewan border. First Nations and Métis Lands in this reach are extensive, including Frog Lake First Nation surrounding Frog Lake, Fishing Lake Métis Settlement surrounding Fishing Lake, and the Onion Lake Cree Nation surrounding Onion Lake on the Alberta/Saskatchewan border. Provincially designated sensitive wildlife areas include a Key Wildlife and Biodiversity zone which provides a wildlife movement corridor for large mammals. Provincial watercourse classifications include Class C (moderate sensitivity) fish habitat but does not contain federally designated critical fish habitat. Historical resources are found along the full extent of this reach with identified values of 4a (previously recorded archaeological resources) and 5a,p (high potential for archaeological and palaeontological resources).

#### ACCESS

- + Limited current access, former ferry crossings are an opportunity

#### SERVICES

- + Elk Point is key service area

#### SCENIC QUALITY

- + Major viewpoints identified

#### HERITAGE VALUES

- + Long history of First Nations and early settlement
- + Frog Lake history

#### NATURAL VALUES

- + Stream confluences

#### ECONOMIC VALUES

- + Development of the Riverview subdivision

#### TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

- + Jet boat adventures

#### INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITIES

- + Frog Lake is a major cultural site, including the story of the North-West Rebellion
- + Fort George and Buckingham House Provincial Historic Site
- + The Windsor salt plant, near the hamlet of Lindbergh, is now closed but was a significant economic boon to the area
- + Former Carlton Trail

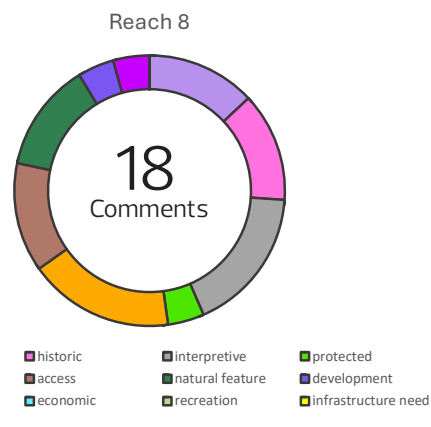
#### INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

- + Additional access points

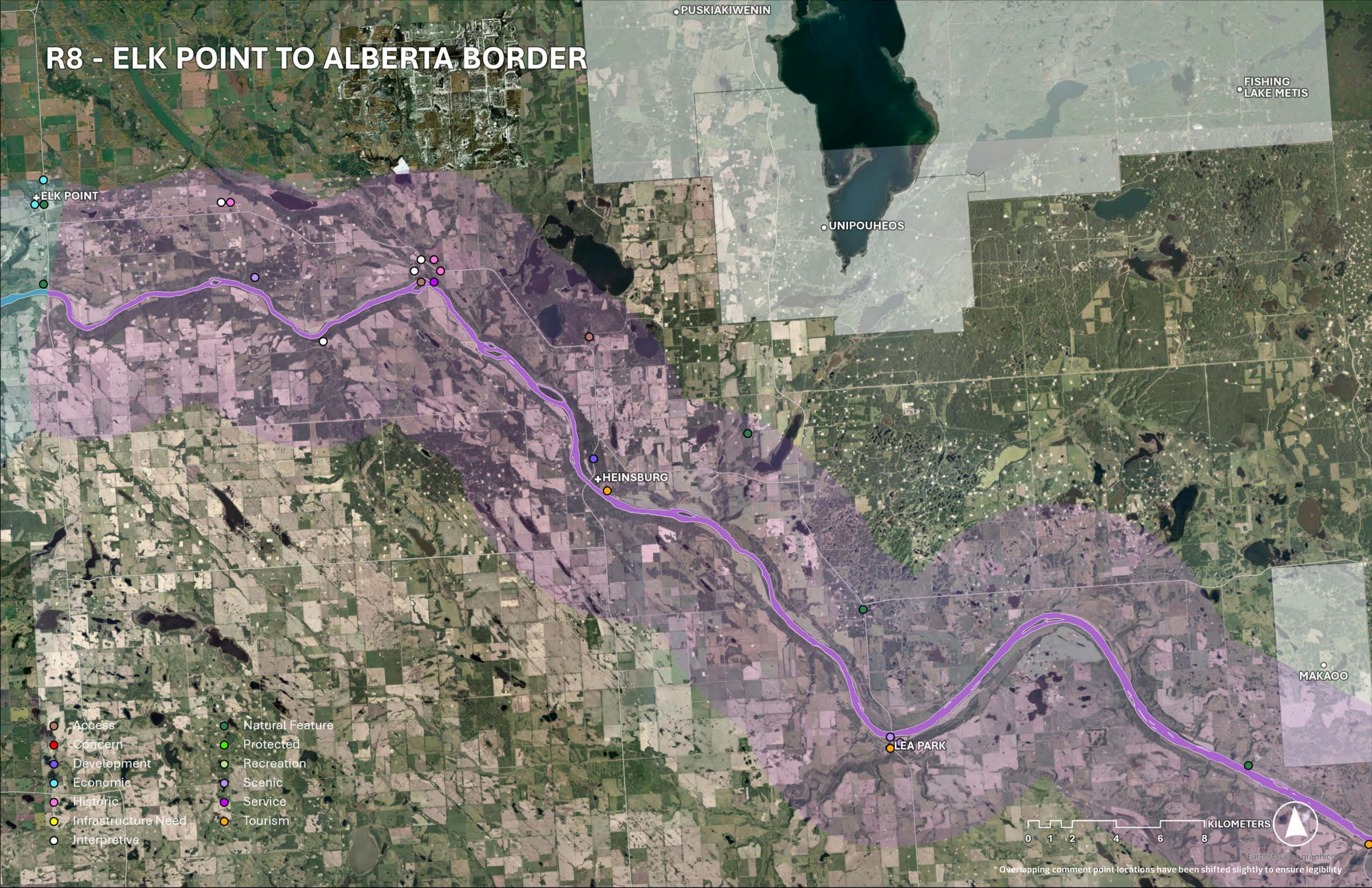
My story of the river and the surrounding lands in this reach is...

"My paternal Grandmother's family was Métis – her maiden name was Coutu. Her family history was documented by Hector Coutu of Two Hills in 1980. My 4X Great Grandmother, Marie Ann Gabourey Lagimodiere, had the first 'European' child in Fort Edmonton. They then moved to MB to be founders of the Red River Settlement – there she became the grandmother to Louis Riel. My family goes back generations along the N.Sask River, and then subsequently the Carlton Trail. These pathways were how my kinfolk traveled, earned their living, and where they settled. I did not learn I was Métis until very recently – it was a secret kept by our parent's generation, who were able to pass for being Caucasian, and did not want to suffer the discrimination that followed the Northwest Resistance. In the early 1950's they moved to Vancouver and started a new life. I would like to contribute to bringing back the recognition they deserve, including their valuable service in opening up the prairies to trade and prosperity. I chose Reach 8 because it should also align with the Carlton Trail and because the Métis history referenced in its overview is connected to my family history."

Comment Classification Summary



# R8 - ELK POINT TO ALBERTA BORDER



- Access
- Concern
- Development
- Economic
- Historic
- Infrastructure Need
- Interpretive
- Natural Feature
- Protected
- Recreation
- Scenic
- Service
- Tourism



Earthstar Geographics  
\* Overlapping comment point locations have been shifted slightly to ensure legibility

## **Appendix E: Heritage River Tourism Planning Report - 2023**

# Heritage River Tourism Planning

Final Report: April 28, 2023

Submitted to: O2 Planning and Design Inc.

Submitted by: Expedition Management Consulting Ltd.

## Introduction

This report provides an analysis of tourism products, strengths and gaps, visitor markets, and tourism opportunities for all reaches of the North Saskatchewan River within the heritage river study area. It also identifies actions to support tourism in the study area overall, as well as in individual reaches. Recommended actions are based on research, analysis, and stakeholder engagement.

## Executive Summary

The North Saskatchewan River flows for more than 800km across the heritage river study area. For the purposes of the study, it is divided into eight river reaches. The character of the river, adjacent lands, nearby communities, and tourism potential varies significantly from reach to reach. The wildest and most adventure-oriented reaches are in the west, closest to the river's headwaters and along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. The reaches in the east are home to more pastoral and cultural landscapes and attractions. The central reaches, those in and around Edmonton, are the most developed and offer a mix of urban and rural visitor experiences.

The rich natural and cultural history of the river ties these reaches together and provides the foundation for a compelling story and unique destinations on and off the water. The story of the river, adjacent lands, and the people connected to it can be told along each reach, leveraging local assets, benefitting local communities, and helping visitors and locals alike understand the significance of the river. The river has always been a key travel route, first for Indigenous people through their traditional territories, then for fur trade and settler exploration, and later for recreation and industry. Tourism along the North Saskatchewan can carry forward this long established role of river as gateway, and usher in a new role of river as a destination.

### Tourism Readiness

To understand the potential and readiness for tourism along the river throughout the study area, we consulted with stakeholders and undertook research for each reach. Engagement opportunities included an online survey, digital workshops, and one-on-one interviews. Research included the review of books and other publications, maps, and online resources such as reports, presentations and websites.

Through this engagement and research, we identified existing tourism assets, opportunities, challenges and strengths, and determined that tourism readiness varies significantly across the eight reaches. Some are well positioned to grow visitation and others will require more concerted efforts to develop their visitor economies. Those that are more ready include reaches: 1 Banff National Park to Abraham

Lake/Bighorn Dam, 2 Nordegg Bridge to Rocky Mountain House, 5 Genesee to Edmonton, and 6 Edmonton to Pakan. Those that are less ready, relatively speaking, are reaches: 3 Rocky Mountain House to Drayton Valley, 4 Drayton Valley to Genesee, 7 Pakan to Elk Point, and 8 Elk Point to the Alberta/Saskatchewan Border. Appendix B provides an overview of the Tourism Readiness of the study area overall, and the Tourism Analysis of River Reaches section of the report provides commentary on the readiness of each reach, along with recommended actions to support tourism development.

### Product Strengths and Gaps

Across the entire study area there are many product strengths. These include outdoor adventure and recreation assets, cultural attractions and historic sites, paddling experiences, natural attractions, as well as gateway and hub communities. Gaps overall include winter and shoulder season experiences, accommodations, riverside support amenities, festivals and events, culinary attractions and offerings, and visitor information.

### Target Markets

Considering existing strengths and potential assets, available visitor data and what inspires different travelers, Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers are the two recommended primary target markets for the study area. Both of these markets are interested in being immersed in local culture and history, and seek out deep engagement with the destinations they visit. As such, these visitors are drawn to heritage sites, museums, nature reserves, outdoor attractions, and cultural events and festivals. Rustic and homey accommodations, such as campsites, homestays, B&Bs, and hostels, suite them well.

Because each river reach is unique, local operators and stakeholders will need to look more closely at their own target markets to ensure they are maximizing the potential for their regions.

### **Authentic Experiencers**

#### **Travel Values**

Learning Travel – like to learn everything about a place, time, or culture.

Nature – enjoy vast natural settings and wonders.

Cultural Immersion – prefer integrating into the local culture.

Personal Development – seek self-improvement through understanding others.

#### **Demographics**

Male: 54%

Female: 46%

Education: Higher than average

Employment: Full Time – more likely than average to be retired

Household Income: Average

Age: 18-34 = 16%

35-54 = 31%

55+ = 53%

### **Cultural Explorers**

#### **Travel Values**

Companion Experiences – prefer travelling with like-minded people.

Living History/Culture – enjoy ancient history and modern culture.

Learning Travel – like to learn everything about a place, time, or culture.

Constant Exploration – always plan for the next outing.

#### **Demographics**

Male: 43%

Female: 57%

Education: Higher than average

Employment: Full Time – less likely than average to be retired

Household Income: Average

Age: 18-34 = 28%

35-54 = 43%

55+ = 30%

### Product Development Opportunities

Based on existing product strengths, our analysis of visitors and potential target markets, as well as our analysis of assets and opportunities in each river reach, we have identified five key product development opportunities for the study area as a whole. These include water-based tourism, outdoor adventure tourism, nature based tourism, cultural tourism, and Indigenous tourism. Many of these overlap in the study area, which is rich in natural, recreational, and cultural assets. This overlap provides meaningful opportunities for the development of tourism products that leverage multiple assets to provide unique, authentic, and unforgettable experiences to visitors.

### Action Items

We have identified 26 actions to help realize the tourism potential of the study area overall. These actions are categorized into three themes: product development, destination marketing, and destination development. Together with the actions proposed for individual reaches, these 26 recommendations will help guide activities to advance tourism along the North Saskatchewan River over the next 10 years.

The following action items have been identified as the top short-term priorities to advance tourism development along the North Saskatchewan River.

1. Establish a North Saskatchewan River Tourism Development Task Force.
2. Inventory all formal and informal river access points along the river and identify priority improvements at key locations to support visitor and operator access.
3. Complete a tourism product development plan that would assist stakeholders in the further development of market ready tourism experiences.
4. Develop signature/epic multi-day North Saskatchewan River Heritage tours that originate in reach 1 and end in reach 8, stopping at key natural, cultural, and recreational attractions, unique accommodations, and local points of interest along the way.
5. Focus product development efforts on the core product areas of water-based tourism, outdoor adventure tourism, nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, and Indigenous tourism.
6. Strengthen community and industry capacity for tourism in those reaches where tourism is less developed.
7. Tell the story of the river from Banff National Park to the Saskatchewan border and make it available for visitors to access through both hard copy and digital information resources.
8. Create a comprehensive online guide to public access sites along the river, including distances between sites, links to critical data about river flow and conditions, and information about sights and attractions along the way.
9. Develop river trip planning resources that go beyond informal access points and random camping by including recommended itineraries, transportation options, gear rental and tour operators, safety considerations, food service and roofed accommodation options, and points of interest on and off the water.
10. Ensure sustainability of the river and adjacent lands is incorporated into tourism planning efforts.

## Destination Analysis

### Product Strengths and Growth Areas

As a result of the tourism asset analysis process and engagement process, we have identified strengths and gaps in the tourism product offering in the study area as a whole. Please see the Tourism Analysis of River Reaches section for reach-specific analyses.

### **Tourism Product Strengths**

Outdoor adventure and recreation assets: There are many existing recreation assets in the study area. These include infrastructure such as river access points and trails, staging areas and campgrounds, as well as tourism operators. Existing operators provide a wide range of products and services for outdoor adventures, including guided paddling tours, canyoning and hiking excursions, horseback rides, shuttles, fishing tours, and outdoor educational experiences. These assets set the stage for new products and experiences for visitors, including those that can connect land, nature and water-based opportunities through outdoor adventure.

Cultural attractions and historic sites: Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site, Fort Edmonton Park, the Alberta Legislature (site of the original Fort Edmonton), Métis Crossing, the Victoria Settlement, and Fort George and Buckingham House are prominent heritage sites along the river. On their own they offer opportunities for structured storytelling, visitor products and experiences specific to the reaches in which they are located. Together they offer the foundation of cultural and natural history storytelling and experiences across reaches and along the entire length of the NSR in Alberta.

Paddling experiences: The river provides opportunities for a variety of paddling activities and experiences, from learn-to-paddle courses to multi-day paddle trips to guided tours. The North Saskatchewan's varied character from reach to reach (faster moving with more rapids in some and slower moving with calmer water in others) and the existence of nearby lakes in many areas can be leveraged to cater to a diversity of visitor experience levels and needs. There are at least seven existing paddling related tour operators, rental, and shuttle providers in the study area.

Natural attractions: The river and adjacent lands are flush with natural assets, including clean water, protected areas, unique and varied landscapes, amazing views, star-filled skies, fish and wildlife. For some visitors these will be the main attraction, while for others they will enhance their experiences on or near the river.

Gateway and hub communities: There are several hamlets, villages, towns, and cities that are located adjacent to or nearby the river. Many have the potential to leverage and build on their unique assets and characteristics to become tourism nodes and destinations in their own right.

## Tourism Product Gaps

Winter and shoulder season experiences: The river itself can only accommodate on-water activities safely for part of the year and most historic sites are only open seasonally through summer months. Tourists need added reasons to visit in fall, winter, and spring. Potential shoulder season and winter products and activities will vary by reach but overall could include stargazing and northern lights viewing, cross country skiing and snowshoeing, snowmobiling, and annual festivals and events.

Accommodations: Accommodation options are limited across almost all reaches. While campgrounds are available in all reaches, many are not close to the river, may not meet demand, and they cater to only one segment of potential overnight visitors. Expansion of options would help attract visitors looking for fixed roof accommodation and higher end experiences, such as unique vacation rentals, glamping-style structures, and upscale rural retreats and hotels.

Riverside support amenities: Most existing river access points are informal and do not include amenities and facilities that support day-use visitation and visitor comfort such as washrooms, garbage receptacles, parking, signage and visitor information, and services such as food and accommodation. These types of amenities are largely clustered in the urban areas in and around the Capital Region.

Festivals and events: There are limited festivals and events in the study area that leverage and celebrate the river, involve the water, or occur in close proximity to it. New events could help to attract more visitors to each reach and extend the traditional summer tourism season.

Culinary attractions and offerings: Options for experiencing local restaurants, food, and beverages are limited across most reaches. Visitors who do not want to self-cater and who want to experience local flavours and support local operators would be hard-pressed to find restaurants and breweries at which to do so.

Visitor information: There is a lack of visitor information about tourism assets and support amenities along the river as a whole. No single organization has the mandate to share the story of the river and its attractions, or to coordinate product development, offerings, and marketing.

## Visitor Analysis

The Alberta government publishes visitor statistics for the province and its tourism regions. The study area crosses five of these 13 areas. Province-wide and nation-wide data is shared here to provide insight into visitor numbers, spending and preferences.

## Travel to Alberta

The majority (82.7%) of visitors to Alberta come from within Alberta.<sup>1</sup> Of 34.6 million annual total person visits in 2019, 28.6 million were from residents of the province, 3.6 million were from other Canadian



provinces, 1.2 million were from the United States and 1.2 million were from overseas. After the US, the top international markets included the UK, China, Germany, Australia, and Japan.

Visitors spent \$10.1 billion in Alberta in 2019, \$7.8 billion of which came from domestic tourists. Overseas visitors spent the most per visit, while domestic/in-province visitors spent the least. Average spend per trip for overseas visitors was \$1,119 and \$242 for Albertans. According to research by Travel Alberta, compared to lower spenders, high value travellers (i.e. those spending the most on trips) are “more likely to travel during off-peak times of the year, spend more on high-end experiences and explore more areas of the province.”<sup>2</sup>

As for length of stay in 2019, in-province visitors had the shortest overnight stays, while overseas visitors stayed the longest (2.2 versus 13.4 person nights). Visiting friends and relatives’ and pleasure were among the main purposes of overnight trips for all visitors. For those visitors travelling from within the province, 42% did so to visit friends and relatives, 40% travelled for pleasure, 11% for business and 8% for other reasons.<sup>3</sup>

For in-province residents, overnight visits in 2019 were distributed unevenly throughout the year, with most trips taken between July and September (34%) and the fewest trips taken in January through March (19%). Trips in April through June accounted for 25% of overnight visits and October through December 22%. As for where they stayed, more than half of all visitors from Alberta bunked at the homes of friends and relatives (54%), 11% stayed at campgrounds/RV parks/backcountry camping, and 31% stayed in hotels/resorts/other commercial roofed properties. The top five activities for Albertans visiting Alberta in 2019 were: visiting friends and family, dining out, shopping, sightseeing, and visiting national, provincial, or other nature parks.<sup>4</sup>

### **Key Trends in Travel Preferences for Domestic and International Travellers**

COVID-19 has impacted travel domestically and internationally for several years. Recovery to pre-COVID travel spending levels in Alberta is expected in 2024.<sup>5</sup> The following provides a snapshot of preferences of domestic Canadian travellers in 2021 and insight into what they might be looking for in the coming years:

- Canadian residents have a strong affinity for nature-based tourist activities.
- Domestic trips are getting shorter, with Canadian residents shifting away from planning longer trips (4+ nights) and moving towards shorter domestic trips (3 nights or less).
- Interest has increased for wildlife viewing, northern lights viewing, and fall colours.
- Natural attractions are the top trip anchor followed by northern lights and historic sites.
- Supported travel options are not as popular as they previously were with domestic tourists. More independent trip styles are gaining popularity.
- The preferred type of accommodation for a trip within Canada is mid-priced hotels, followed by staying with friends and relatives and vacation rentals.<sup>6</sup>

The following provides a snapshot of the preferences of international travellers from Travel Alberta's target markets through 2024, including the US, UK, Germany, and Japan:

- Seeing the northern lights is now the top activity for many international travellers to base a trip around.
- Trying local food and drink and nature based activities are still popular though interest in them has dropped compared to previous years.
- Late spring and peak summer months are among the most popular travel times for those considering a trip to Canada, and some travellers are also interested in early fall trips.<sup>7</sup>

### Target Markets for the North Saskatchewan River

Taking into account visitor data, what inspires different types of travellers, and considering the existing and potential tourism assets in the study area, the following markets are the primary recommended focus for tourism along the river. It is worthwhile noting that because each reach is unique, local operators and stakeholders will need to look more closely at their own target market to ensure they are maximizing the potential for their regions.

Authentic Experiencers. These travellers are typically looking for authentic, tangible engagement with the destinations they visit and are especially interested in understanding the history and culture of these places. Their travel values include:

- Learning Travel – like to learn everything about a place, time, or culture
- Nature – enjoy vast natural settings and wonders
- Cultural Immersion – prefer integrating into the local culture
- Personal Development – seek self-improvement through understanding others

Authentic Experiencers are most likely to be seen at nature reserves, museums, hiking trails, and world heritage sites. They enjoy campsites and homestays for accommodation.<sup>8</sup>

#### Authentic Experiencers Demographics

Male: 54%  
Female: 46%  
Education: Higher than average  
Employment: Full Time – more likely than average to be retired  
Household Income: Average  
Age: 18-34 = 16%  
 35-54 = 31%  
 55+ = 53%

Cultural Explorers. These travellers enjoy frequent weekend escapes, prefer unstructured travel, and love immersing themselves in nature, local culture, and history. Their travel values include:

- Companion Experiences – prefer traveling with like-minded people
- Living History/Culture – enjoy ancient history and modern culture
- Learning Travel – seek to learn everything about a place, time, or culture
- Constant Exploration – always plan for the next outing

#### Cultural Explorer Demographics

Male: 43%  
Female: 57%  
Education: Higher than average  
Employment: Full Time – less likely than average to be retired  
Household Income: Average  
Age: 18-34 = 28%  
 35-54 = 43%  
 55+ = 30%

Cultural Explorers are most likely to be seen at heritage sites, museums, cultural events, and festivals. They prefer staying at B&Bs and hostels.<sup>9</sup>

Two potential secondary markets are Curious Adventurers and Hotspot Hunters. These groups have been identified by Travel Alberta as “High Value Travellers”, meaning they are the visitors “likely to spend more per visit, yield the highest return on investment and make the greatest contribution to the province’s economic growth.”<sup>10</sup> Curious Adventurers like to explore new places and learn about a destination through authentic culture, landscapes, and people they meet. Hotspot Hunters are looking for top attractions, one of a kind experiences and connections with local experts.

## Industry Engagement

A number of engagement activities were provided to stakeholders through February and early March 2023. The purpose of these activities was to gather information regarding tourism assets, visitor market opportunities, tourism development readiness, and growth areas for tourism along the North Saskatchewan River. Stakeholders from across all eight river reaches were invited to participate. An online survey was open for three weeks and was completed by twenty people. We also held three digital workshops which included a presentation about the project and facilitated activities to gather input; these were attended by nine participants total. In addition, we interviewed 13 stakeholders one-on-one. See Appendix A for a summary of what we heard through these activities, as well as opportunities and challenges identified through engagement.

## Tourism Product Development Opportunities

The following high level product development opportunities were identified through the process. Tourism promoting organizations, operators and experience providers can use these to develop reach-specific ideas, encourage collaboration in the development of tourism in specific areas, and to coordinate and develop experiences that span multiple reaches or the entire length of the river in Alberta. Note that many of these product categories can overlap in the study area, which is rich in natural, recreational, and cultural assets. This overlap provides meaningful opportunities for the development of tourism products that leverage multiple assets to provide unique, authentic, and unforgettable experiences to visitors.

### Water-based Tourism

At its simplest, water-based tourism is tourism that provides visitors with opportunities to interact with a water body. It includes boating of all forms, related activities such as fishing and sightseeing tours, as well as shoreside activities such as wildlife viewing and swimming. Water levels in the North Saskatchewan River fluctuate significantly seasonally and during weather events. As a result, jet boating and related activities, paddling (canoeing, kayaking, stand up paddle boarding, rafting) and fishing are those most suited to the study area overall. The suitability for these activities depends on river conditions, which vary reach to reach and season to season. Generally speaking, in the western reaches, the river runs faster and is more suited to advanced and intermediate paddlers and boaters, and in the eastern reaches it is calmer and suited to more beginner river users. For the most part, water based activities, including fishing, are

possible from late spring to fall. The river is quite clean, and is home to many species of fish, including burbot, goldeye, lake sturgeon, mountain whitefish, northern pike, sauger, sucker, and walleye.<sup>11</sup> Fishing on the river is said to be underrated, with the lack of crowds contributing to its appeal.<sup>12,13,14</sup>

### Market Insights

- Kayaking, canoeing and stand-up paddle boarding have grown significantly in popularity over the last few years.<sup>15</sup> Retailers like REI and Mountain Equipment Company saw significant growth in sales of equipment for these activities during the pandemic, and participation in these sports is expected to continue.<sup>16,17</sup>
- There are many new paddle board tour operators in Alberta, most of which are located near Calgary, suggesting there may be opportunity for new operators elsewhere in the province. One Cochrane-based operator (CANRVRSUP) offers an 'introduction to river stand up paddle boarding' tour from Rocky Mountain House on the North Saskatchewan River.<sup>18</sup>
- Canoeing/kayaking ranked as the second top new activity that people would like to try in the 2017 Alberta Recreation Study.<sup>19</sup>
- The number of active anglers in Alberta grew from 179,461 in 2005 to 282,880 in 2015.<sup>20</sup> Overall fishing/angling was worth \$600 million in Alberta in 2020.<sup>21</sup>
- Anglers contributed a total of \$7.9 billion to various local economies in Canadian provinces and territories in 2015. The majority of active anglers in Canada in 2015 were residents fishing within their home province or territory.<sup>22</sup>
- In the 2017 Alberta Recreation survey 26.2% of Alberta households and 19.2% of individuals identified as having participated in fishing in the last 12 months.<sup>23</sup>
- Many jurisdictions in the United States and internationally are developing blueways to enhance and connect water based tourism and outdoor recreation.<sup>24</sup> Blueways are water trails that connect non-motorized water users to tourist attractions, land-based trails, unique locations and experiences, and that provide water access points and related amenities.<sup>25</sup>

### Outdoor Adventure Tourism

Outdoor adventure tourism can be defined as activities that present participants with risk and challenge. These can include 'hard' and 'soft' adventures, with the former involving more potential danger and requiring more experience and better fitness of participants, and the latter involving less potential danger and less experience.<sup>26</sup> Hiking, camping, rock climbing, ice climbing, mountain biking, skiing, rafting, canoeing, canyoning, ATVing and snowmobiling are examples of outdoor adventure activities that already happen in the study area, especially in the western reaches. The mountainous geography and existing recreational infrastructure in reaches 1 and 2 lend themselves well to these types of activities, though there are also opportunities in other reaches, in particular for experiences that are trail based and those that connect water and land based activities. Parks and public land are a crucial ingredient for outdoor adventure activities.<sup>27</sup>

### Market Insights

- The most popular winter activities in Alberta include walking or hiking on trails, walking for pleasure and exercise, resort-based skiing or snowboarding, bicycling, cross country skiing, snowshoeing and ice skating.<sup>28</sup>
- A majority of Albertans (67%) have a preference for non-motorized outdoor recreation.<sup>29</sup>
- Snowmobiling and ATV use are substantially more popular in rural areas, towns, and villages than they are in Edmonton and Calgary.<sup>30</sup>
- It is estimated that Alberta residents and visitors from other parts of Canada and other countries made 15.4 million visits to Alberta Crown Land in 2017 for outdoor recreation purposes. Albertans accounted for 83.7% of total visits.<sup>31</sup>
- Research in the U.S. indicates that investments in infrastructure to support outdoor recreation supports local economies, and that on average the economies of rural places, small cities and large metros that depend on outdoor recreation outperform their peers. The winter and summer trail system in Methow Valley Washington, for example, supports \$6 in salaries for local workers for every \$1 spent to develop and operate the trails.<sup>32</sup>
- As the population ages, demand for soft adventure activities, such as wildlife viewing and walking is expected to grow.<sup>33</sup>

### Nature-based Tourism

Nature-based tourism is tourism that is based on the natural attractions of an area.<sup>34</sup> The North Saskatchewan River and surrounding lands are rich in such attractions, and offer opportunities for birdwatching, wildlife viewing, scenic tours, stargazing, northern lights watching, nature photography and immersive experiences that help visitors learn about the environment and natural history. Attractions vary by reach as the river passes through many unique ecosystems and landscapes. Nature-based tourism can provide local incentives for the conservation of landscapes and habitats along the entire length of the river, and can be a tool to share the unique natural history of each reach.<sup>35</sup> Nature-based tourism assets can support many types of activities, both guided and self-directed. They can also support visitation through all seasons of the year, which is especially important in the study area where water-based activities are limited to no more than six months each year.

### Market Insights

- Visiting a national, provincial, or other nature park was among the top five activities for Albertans visiting Alberta in 2019.<sup>36</sup>
- Canadian residents have a strong affinity for nature-based tourist activities and natural attractions are their top trip anchor.<sup>37</sup>
- Interest among domestic tourists has increased for wildlife viewing, northern light viewing, and fall colours viewing.<sup>38</sup>
- Seeing the northern lights is now the top activity for many international travellers to base a trip around.<sup>39</sup>
- Nature-based tourism is a priority area of focus for tourism development in Alberta.<sup>40</sup>

## Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism sees visitors immersed in local heritage and culture. It leaves people educated and inspired and connects them with the places they visit. It occurs when participation in a cultural or heritage activity is a significant factor for travelling.<sup>41,42</sup> Cultural tourism has emerged as a growing trend in the last 10 years and is expected to dominate over the next 20.<sup>43</sup> Cultural tourism assets are varied and can include: historic sites and interpretive centres, art galleries and exhibitions, museums, cultural centres, historic forts, historic driving routes and walking trails, as well as cultural and heritage themed tours, events, festivals, and services such as accommodation and food.<sup>44</sup> The study area is well positioned to attract more cultural tourism. Many assets already exist in the study area, can be further leveraged, and intentionally connected to enhance visitor experience and immersion in local heritage and culture.

### Market Insights

- Cultural experiences are a key driver for young Canadians, with those ages 18-34 rating culture in their top 3 reasons for visiting a destination.<sup>45</sup>
- A 2013 study on demand for rural vacation experiences in Alberta indicated that culture and heritage related experiences would be an ideal activity on a same day or overnight trip.<sup>46</sup>
- Improvements in cultural tourism that can encourage visitation in rural areas include better advertising, higher quality attractions and more unique events and festivals.<sup>47</sup>
- According to the 2017 Alberta Recreation Study, 57.4% of Alberta households had taken part in a visit to a historic site or museum in the previous year.<sup>48</sup>
- There is growing consumer research supporting the idea of “responsible travel” which predicts travellers will want to lighten their footprint on destinations by supporting local economies, engaging with local cultures, reducing carbon emissions, and enabling environmental conservation.<sup>49</sup>

## Indigenous Tourism

This sector has strong potential for growth in Alberta. Across Canada it is expected to recover more quickly than the rest of the tourism sector due to observable increases in domestic and international consumer demand for Indigenous tourism products and services.<sup>50</sup> The entire NSR heritage river study area overlaps with the traditional territories of many First Nations and Métis communities, and there are many reserves and settlements in close proximity to the river. There are existing Indigenous tourism operators in the study area, offering everything from geological tours of the river valley in Edmonton to accommodations and cultural retreats in more rural reaches. Across the study area there are many opportunities for Indigenous communities and individuals to provide tourism products and experiences to visitors. Destination Canada’s research indicates that the Explorer Quotient types of visitors that are looking for an Indigenous tourism experience are Cultural Explorers and Authentic Experiencers.<sup>51</sup>

### Market Insights

- Indigenous tourism in Canada saw unprecedented growth from 2014 to 2019.<sup>52</sup>
- Indigenous tourism in Alberta was worth an estimated \$166.2 million in GDP prior to COVID-19 and supported close to 3,000 jobs and 125 Indigenous tourism businesses.<sup>53</sup>

- The top five overseas markets for Indigenous Tourism in Alberta are the United Kingdom, China, Japan, Australia, and Germany.<sup>54</sup>
- Activities and experiences of interest to domestic visitors include traditional cooking, stargazing, guided hiking tours, arts and crafts, powwows, and horseback riding.<sup>55</sup>
- International markets are similarly interested in authentic and immersive experiences with Indigenous people, experiences that include nature and learning, and experiences that involve 'discoveries' and 'adventures'.<sup>56</sup>

## River Wide Action Plan

The action plan is divided into three sub-sections, which include:

1. Product Development
2. Destination Marketing
3. Destination Development

Action items have been developed for each sub-section that will help advance tourism in the study area over the next 10 years.

### Sectoral Leads

Sectoral leads have been suggested for each action item (e.g. private sector, public/government sector, and voluntary sector). Where appropriate, sectors are encouraged to seek partnerships with stakeholder groups, irrespective of sector, to leverage available resources.

### Quick Wins



A blue star indicates that an action item is a “Quick Win.” Quick wins are actions that can be implemented in the near term, have a high probability of success, and are relatively simple to complete.

## 1. Product Development

	Action Items	Sectoral Lead
1	Complete a tourism product development plan that would assist stakeholders in the further development of market ready tourism experiences.	Public
2	Inventory all formal and informal river access points along the river and identify priority improvements at key locations to support visitor and operator access.	Public
3	Develop signature/epic multi-day North Saskatchewan River Heritage tours that originate in reach 1 and end in reach 8, stopping at key natural, cultural, and recreational attractions, unique accommodations, and local points of interest along the way.	Private
4	Develop and market paddle trails on and near the river.	Private
5	Develop trails near access sites to provide additional opportunities for visitors to explore nearby areas and communities.	Public/ Voluntary
★ 6	Focus product development efforts on the core product areas of water-based tourism, outdoor adventure tourism, nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, and Indigenous tourism.	Private/ Public
★ 7	Encourage new and existing tourism and outdoor education operators to provide ‘learn to recreate’ products specific to the river to attract new visitors with less experience in outdoor recreational activities.	Private



Action Items		Sectoral Lead
8	Identify products and assets that would support more year-round visitation in each reach. This might include fall colour river tours and/or regular small to medium scale destination-wide events.	Private/ Voluntary
★ 9	Encourage product development that leverages and tells the story of the river from multiple perspectives and that encourages responsible visitation.	Private/ Voluntary
★ 10	Support products and experiences that are nature based and that educate visitors about the ecology of the river and adjacent lands.	All

## 2. Destination Marketing

Action Items		Sectoral Lead
1	Tell the story of the river from Banff National Park to the Saskatchewan border and make it available for visitors to access through both hard copy and digital information resources. Anchor attractions should be highlighted in each reach.	All
★ 2	Make conservation and the health of the river a key part of the river's story in marketing materials.	All
3	Create a comprehensive online guide to public access sites along the river, including distances between sites, links to critical data about river flow and conditions, and information about sights and attractions along the way.	Public/ Voluntary
4	Coordinate across jurisdictions to establish consistent and well-developed signage along the river related to river access points to improve wayfinding and provide some degree of uniformity.	Public/ Voluntary
★ 5	Develop river trip planning resources that go beyond informal access points and random camping by including recommended itineraries, transportation options, gear rental and tour operators, safety considerations, food service and roofed accommodation options, and points of interest on and off the water.	Private/ Voluntary
6	Leverage technology such as apps and virtual reality experiences to improve access to information about the river and to better immerse visitors in the history of the river and its historic attractions and sites.	All
★ 7	Include information about responsible visitation and sustainable tourism in marketing materials.	All

## 3. Destination Development

Action Items		Sectoral Lead
1	Establish a North Saskatchewan River Tourism Development Task Force. Consider starting with a Task Force that has representatives from reaches 1, 2 and 3. Once	

Action Items	Sectoral Lead
<p>this becomes successful consider adding additional Task Forces in those reaches who wish to collaborate. The purpose of the Task Force will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Take the lead role in implementing the action plan.</li> <li>B. Secure partnerships and leverage funds.</li> <li>C. Encourage investment in tourism development initiatives along the North Saskatchewan River.</li> <li>D. Be a forum for collaboration and communication on the promotion and development of tourism initiatives.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2</b> Strengthen community and industry capacity for tourism in those reaches where tourism is less developed. This may include the facilitation of training opportunities in tourism marketing and product development, provision of information resources, organizing collaborative opportunities for tourism operators, and supporting grant applications to access tourism development funding.</p>	Public/ Voluntary
<p><b>3</b> Strengthen visitor services capacity across all reaches, encouraging more modern, coordinated, and flexible visitor information services to better meet the needs of visitors.</p>	All
<p><b>4</b> Support Indigenous tourism operators to open and grow businesses along each reach in ways that are directed by and appropriate to First Nations and Métis peoples and communities, and that help them to share their own knowledge and stories in their own words.</p>	Public/ Voluntary
<p><b>5</b> Leverage data from regional tourism organizations and novel data sources like fitness tracking apps, social media, and web browser data to estimate how much people are visiting and recreating in different reaches in order to help communities and operators capitalize on demand.</p>	All
<p><b>6</b> Work with existing attractions to identify ways and requirements for them to operate year-round or to extend their seasons beyond the standard summer May to September timeframe.</p>	All
<p><b>7</b> Leverage technology to improve access to information about the river and to expand accommodation options in rural areas.</p>	All
<p><b>8</b> ★ Leverage Travel Alberta Tourism Development Zone projects to align tourism opportunities along the river and identify shared priorities across different reaches.</p>	Public
<p><b>9</b> ★ Ensure sustainability of the river and adjacent lands is incorporated into tourism planning efforts.</p>	All

## **Top 10 Action Items**

The following action items have been identified as the top short-term priorities to advance tourism development along the North Saskatchewan River.

1. Establish a North Saskatchewan River Tourism Development Task Force.
2. Inventory all formal and informal river access points along the river and identify priority improvements at key locations to support visitor and operator access.
3. Complete a tourism product development plan that would assist stakeholders in the further development of market ready tourism experiences.
4. Develop signature/epic multi-day North Saskatchewan River Heritage tours that originate in reach 1 and end in reach 8, stopping at key natural, cultural, and recreational attractions, unique accommodations, and local points of interest along the way.
5. Focus product development efforts on the core product areas of water-based tourism, outdoor adventure tourism, nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, and Indigenous tourism.
6. Strengthen community and industry capacity for tourism in those reaches where tourism is less developed.
7. Tell the story of the river from Banff National Park to the Saskatchewan border and make it available for visitors to access through both hard copy and digital information resources.
8. Create a comprehensive online guide to public access sites along the river, including distances between sites, links to critical data about river flow and conditions, and information about sights and attractions along the way.
9. Develop river trip planning resources that go beyond informal access points and random camping by including recommended itineraries, transportation options, gear rental and tour operators, safety considerations, food service and roofed accommodation options, and points of interest on and off the water.
10. Ensure sustainability of the river and adjacent lands is incorporated into tourism planning efforts.

## **Organizing for Tourism Development**

Destinations along the North Saskatchewan River stand to benefit by cooperating to attract visitors to the river. Although these destinations may compete at the local level for visitors in some instances, the first hurdle to overcome is attracting visitors to the river in the first place. Therefore, there is opportunity to leverage the reach and resources of multiple partners through the establishment of a North Saskatchewan River Tourism Development Task Force that would more strongly promote and develop the river as a destination.

Jurisdictions across Alberta have implemented a variety of models and collaboration frameworks to grow tourism. It is important to recognize that there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution. Models and frameworks need to be tailored to the particular needs and interests of the stakeholders involved. With that in mind, tourism stakeholders could consider the following options for organizing themselves for tourism development along the North Saskatchewan River.

### Option 1: All River Reaches

This option would entail organizing tourism stakeholders into a group that oversees and promotes development of tourism along the full length of the river in Alberta. A key strength of this approach is the opportunity to develop a river-wide brand that could be promoted to visitors. This would encourage consistent messaging that can be readily leveraged for collaborative marketing.

A potential drawback of this approach is the challenge of organizing and engaging many partners spread out over a large geographic area. Additionally, differences in product offerings along the river can be difficult to clearly represent and promote to visitors.

#### **The Cowboy Trail**

The Cowboy Trail is an example of multiple partners spread out over a large geographic area coming together to establish a consistent tourism brand. The Cowboy Trail is a 700km stretch of highway in Alberta that promotes western vacations and adventures.

### Option 2: Segmentation by River Reaches and/or Product Offerings

A second option would be to organize tourism stakeholders based on their location along the river and/or the characteristics of their product offerings. For example, river reaches 1 to 3 have a similar product offering that is focused on adventure tourism and connection to nature. River reaches 4 to 6 could be grouped together to focus on travelers who want outdoor experiences close to urban amenities, and reaches 7 to 8 could be grouped together to focus on their cultural offerings and more relaxing river experiences. Stakeholders in these reach groupings could form a collaboration framework that would see them work together to develop similar experience offerings and target the same visitor markets.

#### **The Foothills Tourism Association**

Foothills Tourism is an example of a tourism organization that is focused on promoting visitation and tourism development of a particular region in Alberta (i.e. the foothills area southwest of Calgary).

It is worth noting that there is often opportunity to formalize collaboration frameworks underneath existing organizations. As an example, Explore Nordegg is an active Destination Marketing/Management Organization (DMO) whose product offering is strongly tied to the river. This organization could spearhead and/or provide support to a river tourism task force made up of local stakeholders in its area of operations. Given the strong degree of alignment that there would be between these two groups, there is opportunity for them to mutually support each other, increase capacity, and achieve greater things than they might have been able to do on their own.

### Option 3: Individual Destinations

A third option would be for business and stakeholders in individual destinations or communities to organize themselves to develop tourism along their portions of the river. Existing DMOs would be well positioned to take on a leading role or to support the efforts of groups/individuals looking to develop tourism along the river.

If stakeholders choose to organize themselves this way, there would still be opportunities to collaborate with neighbouring destinations/communities and other jurisdictions along the river. This would most likely occur on a project-by-project basis where there is strong alignment between the goals and objectives of the partners involved.

## Tourism Analysis of River Reaches

The following provides an analysis of tourism readiness, assets, opportunities, challenges, and potential action items for each study area river reach.

### Reach 1 - Banff National Park to Abraham Lake/Bighorn Dam

This reach is the most wild and already attracts domestic and international visitors for water, land and nature based activities and adventures year-round. Its relative remoteness, location along the eastern slopes and less developed nature, are key draws. Here the river runs primarily through awe-inspiring protected areas, and pools in Abraham Lake before being released downstream from the Bighorn Dam. This stretch of the river, closest to the North Saskatchewan's headwaters, is appropriate for more advanced and intermediate paddlers, contains some rapids, and has options for single or two day trips between Banff National Park and Preacher's Point campground, just before the lake. The lake itself is not as suitable for water-based adventures in most seasons given dangerous winds, but attracts many to its edges in warmer months and onto the ice to explore its bubbles in the winter. With many established assets and operators, and its connection to Banff National Park and proximity to Jasper National Park, this reach is among the most attractive for tourism in the study area.

#### Key Assets

- Many existing outdoor recreation assets and activities are on and near the river including rafting, kayaking, camping, hiking, climbing, skating, canyoning, horseback riding, and a via ferrata route.
- Several established tour operators including HeLa Ventures, Rockies Heli Canada, Western Canyoning Adventure, Nordegg Adventures, and Girth Hitch Guiding which offer a diversity of tours and activities including rafting and river trips, kayak and canoe rentals and shuttles, Abraham Lake ice walks, canyon tours, nature photo tours, guided hikes, ice climbs, scenic flights, snowshoeing, and via ferrata tours.
- Several formal and rustic campsites are in the area. There are informal campsites along Abraham Lake, as well as two rustic resort style developments offering lodge and cabin rentals and camping for RVs.
- Several organizations exist to support and promote tourism in the reach including Explore Nordegg and David Thompson Country.
- Limited light pollution in the area makes it an ideal place for stargazing and northern lights viewing.

#### Story Map Attractions

The following attractions could be considered for inclusion in tourism-related story maps of the area.

- Banff National Park
- Abraham Lake
- North Saskatchewan Headwaters

### Action Items

- Develop more river access points for non-motorized boating to improve ease of access, allow for more river trip options, and improve river user safety.
- Encourage more diverse accommodation options nearby to attract more diverse visitors and further expand off-peak season visitation.
- Expand stargazing and northern lights viewing opportunities and information.
- Consider developing more formal amenities in the backcountry areas accessed from Highway 11, to provide more land and nature-based options for visitors including hut to hut experiences north of Abraham Lake. Formalize trail information and maintaining existing trails.
- The area is covered by Travel Alberta's new David Thompson tourism region and a regional tourism plan was being developed at the time of writing this report. Leverage this to identify new access points, infrastructure investments, streamlined processes for operators, and strategies to ensure the long term sustainability of tourism in the region, including mitigating impacts on its unique environment.
- Leverage the unique ecology and landscapes in the area, and its proximity to the river's headwaters, to share its natural history and to educate visitors about the importance of the ecological health of the river and adjacent lands.

### Reach 2 - Nordegg Bridge to Rocky Mountain House

This stretch of the river is among the more tourism ready of all reaches in the study. It is characterized by stretches of undeveloped crown land along the river, two anchor historic communities at each end (Nordegg and Rocky Mountain House) which are home to tourism operators that serve reaches 1 and 2, numerous land and water based recreational and tourism assets, and two key historic attractions that highlight industrial and fur trade heritage of the area. Three to four day paddling trips are possible and the river here is said to be suitable for intermediate paddlers and also for day trips.<sup>57</sup> The level of the river fluctuates significantly due to the Bighorn Dam. The Brierlies rapids near Rocky Mountain House are the most consistent whitewater available to paddlers from Edmonton.<sup>58</sup>

### Key Assets

- River access points and multiple trailheads and staging areas for hiking, equestrian and OHV users, including a multi-use trail currently in development between Rocky Mountain House and Nordegg.<sup>59</sup>
- Several provincial parks, recreation and protected areas that offer land and nature-based tourism opportunities (e.g. Saunders Provincial Recreation Area, Crimson Lake Provincial Park, and Horburg Provincial Recreation Area).
- Several operators offer guided canoe and raft trips on the river and shuttles between river access points.
- Numerous tour operators focus on specific types of water and land-based adventures such as equestrian rides, fishing tours, guided hikes and paddle excursions, as well as outdoor education. Examples of these operators include Skadi Wilderness Adventures, McKenzies Trails West, and Smitty's Outdoor Adventures. Some operators in this reach operate year-round.

- Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site and Brazeau Collieries Mine National Heritage Site provide anchor attractions at each end of the reach. The Brierlies rapids can be accessed directly from the Rocky Mountain House site.
- Several organizations exist to promote tourism including Explore Nordegg and David Thompson Country. The reach also overlaps with the boundaries of the Central Alberta Tourism Alliance.

### Story Map Attractions

The following attractions could be considered for inclusion in tourism-related story maps of the area.

- Brierlies rapids
- Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site
- Brazeau Collieries Mine National Heritage Site
- Provincial Parks and Recreation Areas (identified above)

### Action Items

- Leverage the status of the David Thomson region as a priority Tourism Development Zone to set priorities and identify streamlined processes to develop new assets on crown land.
- Continue to build the Rocky to Nordegg trail and develop tourism assets (such as campgrounds and river access points), products and experiences (such as tours and itineraries) that connect land and water-based activities.
- Attract and support new food and other tourism supporting businesses (gear, accommodation, local transportation services) to Nordegg and Rocky Mountain House to provide more amenities and more retail vibrancy for tourism.
- Expand visitor access to outdoor educational opportunities to take advantage of existing facilities and teach tourists about the ecology of the river and water safety.
- Expand programming at existing cultural attractions and make further links to the river.

### Reach 3: Rocky Mountain House to Drayton Valley

This reach offers a different wilderness experience than those further west, running largely through boreal forest outside of the eastern slopes. Low grade rapids and islands with sandy beaches make it ideal for quiet multi-day paddling excursions.<sup>60</sup> As in reach 2, fluctuating river levels due to the operation of the Big Horn Dam, spring thaw and weather events make it challenging to develop infrastructure close to the river. Limited road access to the river between the towns of Rocky Mountain House and Drayton Valley also limit public access points to the water, and make this reach more suited to guided fishing tours and river adjacent exploration. Compared to reaches 1 and 2, tourism in this reach is less well developed beyond Rocky Mountain House and the area is less tourism ready.

### Key Assets

- The river runs through largely undeveloped forested areas, including islands that can be used for camping.



- Blue Rapids Provincial Recreation Area runs along the river south of Drayton Valley and offers ATV trails. It is under the management of Eagle Point Blue Rapids Parks Council. There are OHV trails on the west side of the river as well.
- There are local paddling clubs (such as Rocky Canoe Club) with good knowledge of the river and that provide programming through summer, starting at local lakes and progressing to the river.
- Accommodation options include a few campgrounds near Rocky Mountain House (e.g. River View Campground, Crimson Lake Campground, Twin Lakes) and standard hotels and motels in Rocky Mountain House and Drayton Valley, along with a few B&Bs.
- Crimson Lake Provincial Park is west of the river and will be a trailhead for the multi-use trail from Rocky to Nordegg.
- Existing tourist information includes a year-round visitor centre operating in the Rocky Mountain House Museum and a locally developed app called Discover David Thompson Trails.
- The North Saskatchewan River Park in Rocky Mountain House is right next to the river and can accommodate RV camping, rodeos, and events.
- A small airport in Rocky Mountain House can accommodate private and commercial aircraft year round and the terminal may be rebuilt in the future.<sup>61</sup>
- Rocky Mountain House is where the Cowboy Trail meets David Thompson Country, strategically positioning the town at the crossroads of two key tourist routes/regions.

#### Story Map Attractions

The following attractions could be considered for inclusion in tourism-related story maps of the area.

- Cowboy Trail
- Provincial Parks and Recreation Areas (identified above)

#### Action Items

- Encourage new fishing outfitters to operate along this reach.
- Leverage the North Saskatchewan River Park in Rocky Mountain House for events that will draw more tourists to the area. Consider a paddling or other water-related event or festival that starts or ends nearby.
- Encourage more accommodation and placemaking in the town of Rocky Mountain House to encourage visitors to spend more time and overnight in the area, whether they are exploring David Thompson Country or the Cowboy Trail.
- Promote managed OHV trails to domestic tourists and support guided tours and experiences within the Blue Rapids Provincial Recreation Area.
- Consider creating a system of managed OHV trails outside of Blue Rapids Provincial Recreation Area to link communities, points of interest and river access points.

#### Reach 4: Drayton Valley to Genesee

This reach is more suited to novice paddlers than upper reaches, and can accommodate half day to five day trips from Drayton Valley to the east in a semi-wilderness setting.<sup>62</sup> Tourism is less developed along the river here than in areas to the west and east, and the reach is not as tourism ready as others. There

are few accommodation options and attractions beyond paddling the river and some trail-based activities in Eagle Point Provincial Park. Outside this park, the reach lends itself to water based activities such as fishing, padding, boating, and camping. Its proximity to the Capital Region is a strength, giving it a large potential domestic visitor base.

#### Key Assets

- Eagle Point Provincial Park is riverfront and offers year round land-based recreation (hiking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, biking) and river access.
- Summer season camping is available at Wiley West campground, just outside of Drayton Valley, including a range of camping style accommodation (rents, RVs, cabins) and programming (food events, camper activities).
- Wilderness camping is available on river banks and islands in this reach.
- There are river access points including boat launches for motorized and non-motorized watercrafts at Wiley West Campground.
- Basic hotel style accommodation is available in Drayton Valley.
- Drayton Valley Hospitality & Tourism Authority offers tourism information, as does Brazeau County.
- An existing Edmonton-based operator provides canoe rental and shuttle services to/from Drayton Valley.<sup>63</sup>

#### Story Map Attractions

The following attractions could be considered for inclusion in tourism-related story maps of the area.

- Wiley West Campground
- Eagle Point Provincial Park

#### Action Items

- Promote fishing tours and public access to the river for angling.
- Encourage new and unique accommodation options in Drayton Valley and in rural areas near the river, as well the development of trail connections between these points and the river.
- Support the creation of scenic river tours and guided paddling tours between Drayton and Edmonton.

#### Reach 5: Genesee to Edmonton

This reach is the most urban, passing through several communities bordering the river in the Capital Region. As a result, there are abundant river and river-adjacent tourism and outdoor recreational activities, and many tourism support amenities. The paddle from Genesee or Devon to Edmonton is popular for locals, and this stretch is well suited to beginners. There are also abundant off-river activities, both recreational and cultural, that combined with other assets including access to an international airport, to make this reach the most tourism ready of all eight reaches in the study area.

### Key Assets

- Several formal boat and hand launches and river access points can be found along this reach, especially throughout Edmonton's river valley park system.
- Developed recreation assets are available year round in river valley adjacent lands and parks - including hiking, walking, biking, and snowshoeing trails, cross country ski trails, downhill ski areas, skating rinks, golf courses, and campgrounds. Fishing is possible from the shore at many locations and a new provincial park may be created at Big Island, a 68-hectare parcel of provincial crown land along the river in southwest Edmonton.
- Existing local operators offer fishing tours, canoe/kayak shuttles, gear rental for paddling and exploring river valley adjacent lands, and glamping accommodations. Examples include Urban River Adventures, Rural Rivers, River Valley Adventure Co, Canoe Heads, and Accessible Waters.
- Several local paddling organizations and clubs offer lessons and club trips for members.
- There is a well-established destination management marketing organization in Edmonton (Explore Edmonton), diverse food and accommodation offerings, and existing cultural and Indigenous tourist attractions and operators such as Fort Edmonton Park, Talking Rock Tours, and Get Hooked Fishing.
- There are several festivals and events tied to the river and river valley including the Edmonton Dragon Boat Festival, Edmonton Folk Fest, Heritage Festival, and Silver Skate.

### Story Map Attractions

The following attractions could be considered for inclusion in tourism-related story maps of the area.

- Paddle route from Genesee/Devon to Edmonton.
- Big Island
- Fort Edmonton Park
- River-related festivals and events (identified above)

### Action Items

- Leverage existing marketing assets and online maps and apps (such as the Commonwealth Walkway App and Explore Edmonton website) to direct visitors to river valley related viewpoints, businesses, and activities.
- Create more fulsome destinations and attract river users to shore hop by locating more tourist supporting services (such as food, accommodation, entertainment, gear rental, and boat storage) in the river valley near water access points.
- Develop guided and self-guided tours that showcase walking and biking routes along riverside trails, and that link local businesses and destinations.
- Create tourism products and itineraries that feature the river and leverage local cultural and heritage offerings. These might include foraging excursions by boat and foot in the river valley, followed by dinner at a nearby restaurant featuring local ingredients, or historic river tours that stop at key sights along the reach and that connect regional destinations.

- Work to leverage Edmonton’s successful event hosting experience by positioning the river prominently in event promotions. Also seek to develop river-based experiences pre and post event for event competitors and spectators.

#### Reach 6: Edmonton to Pakan

This reach is characterized by pastoral landscapes, dark skies, and established cultural and historic attractions. It is less travelled by paddlers but offers beginner friendly opportunities to explore the water, along with many opportunities for anglers.<sup>64</sup> Less information about using the river is available east of Edmonton, including trip itineraries, access points, and typical flow characteristics. Despite this, relatively easy access to main provincial highways and the Edmonton International Airport, the existence of established destinations, and several local agencies that work to promote tourism, make this reach among the most tourism ready.

#### Key Assets

- Multiple well established historic and cultural attractions and landscapes, including Fort Heritage Precinct (open year round), Victoria District National Historic Site, Victoria Trail, and Métis Crossing (open year round).
- Several provincial natural areas are near the river including Redwater, Astotin, and Northwest Bruderheim, providing opportunities for hunting, snowmobiling and OHV use.
- Existing riverside parks, walking, biking, and cross country ski trails in adjacent communities, including Fort Saskatchewan and Strathcona County, and plans for new trails, parks and bridges that connect the north and south sides of the river.
- Camping opportunities can be found near the river, including at Métis Crossing and Victoria Trail campground and RV park. Métis Crossing also offers lodge and tipi accommodation, and more standard hotel and motel options are concentrated in the western stretch of this reach in nearby communities. Pine Creek Retreat is located next to the river and offers ‘Métis inspired shelter experiences’.<sup>65</sup>
- Several fishing tour companies operate in the area and sturgeon are said to be common in some areas of the reach.
- Elk Island National Park and Beaver Hills Biosphere Reserve are further south of the river, offer additional year-round outdoor recreational opportunities and are dark sky preserves.

#### Story Map Attractions

The following attractions could be considered for inclusion in tourism-related story maps of the area.

- Historic and cultural attractions, especially Métis Crossing (identified above)
- Elk Island National Park
- Beaver Hills Biosphere Reserve
- Provincial natural areas (identified above)

### Action Items

- Develop additional riverside trails to provide off-river assets and allow those without boats to enjoy and engage with the river.
- Encourage development of more diverse accommodation options near the river - including glamping, vacation rentals and B&Bs - to provide more opportunity for visitors to extend day trips into overnight stays.
- Leverage Métis Crossing as a primary attraction and venue for river related signature festivals and events, and a destination for learn to kayak/canoe and river safety courses.
- Develop self-guided tours that highlight the cultural attractions and history of the area, and that link to services and accommodation options such as those available at Métis Crossing.
- Encourage operators in the Capital Region to provide transportation to and guided tours of Métis Crossing and the surrounding area, including the Victoria Settlement and other cultural destinations in the region.
- Develop dark sky and northern lights tourism experiences on or near the river valley.

### Reach 7: Pakan to Elk Point

This reach is characterized by a quiet river that passes through parkland areas, farmland, and lesser known heritage sites. As with reach 6, there are few formal access points and limited information readily available about using the river here, though Pakan to Myrnam is referenced as a known canoeing route in some materials, and bridges across the river offer informal launches at either side.<sup>66</sup> Most lands along the river are privately owned. While this reach has potential for increased visitation, especially when coupled with reach 8, tourism assets, products and experiences related and/or adjacent to the river are not yet well developed.

### Key Assets

- Trails for ATVs and snowmobiles can be found on the south side of the river near Duvernay at Cougar Patch, and a local snowmobile association is said to have cabins available for year round use. Nearby Brosseau is a gravitational point for snowmobilers in the winter.
- Points of interest are scattered along and within the river, including a park, viewing platform and small campsite at Elk Point Bridge, and the historic Fort de L'Isle/Fort Island near Myrnam which contains the remains of three different fur trading forts.
- The 300km long Iron Horse Trail is not riverside but is a key asset for the region, with the town of Elk Point being a staging point for the trail.
- A new tour operator, River Ranch Adventures is about to open for its first season. They plan to offer horse trail rides along the banks of the river and floats back downstream.
- Several organizations exist to promote tourism and economic development in this reach, including Go East of Edmonton, Travel Lakeland, Alberta HUB, St Paul Elk Point Economic Development Alliance. At the time of writing the latter was working on a Tourism Opportunity Identification and Destination Development Strategy.
- The reach overlaps with numerous thematic tourism routes that have been developed by the Northern Alberta Bilingual Tourism Network.<sup>67</sup>

### Story Map Attractions

The following attractions could be considered for inclusion in tourism-related story maps of the area.

- Iron Horse Trail
- Fort de L'Isle/Fort Island
- Cougar Patch trails

### Action Items

- Link points of interest and attractions across reaches 6, 7 and 8 to leverage special aspects and common elements of each.
- Build on existing ATV and snowmobile trails, groups, and amenities to attract domestic visitors seeking motorized recreation options and to expand the tourism season into winter with snowmobiling. Consider also connecting the Iron Horse Trail to river side motorized recreational trails.
- Work with the Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta to better connect the river into francophone tourism routes.
- Incorporate the river into current and future regional tourism planning, including Tourism Development Zone work by Travel Alberta and tourism planning by the St Paul Elk Point Economic Development Alliance.
- Create purposeful connections by road and river from Métis Crossing to the west and Fort George and Buckingham House to the east.

### Reach 8: Elk Point to Alberta-Saskatchewan Border

The greatest potential of this reach lies in cultural, heritage and Indigenous tourism. There are historic sites along and near the river, numerous nearby First Nation and Métis communities, and hamlets that already serve as staging points for the Iron Horse Trail. As with reach 7 there is relatively little information available about the river and getting into it here, though old ferry crossings and existing bridges are said to serve as informal access points. While the reach isn't necessarily tourism ready, existing attractions and assets, including tourism organizations serving the area, mean that it has the potential to be with strategic investments and regional collaboration.

### Key Assets

- Cultural attractions include Fort George and Buckingham House Provincial Historic Site (open seasonally) at the river's edge and Frog Lake National Historic Site northeast of the river.
- The multi-use Iron Horse Trail from Heinsburg to Lindbergh almost parallels the river, has no road crossings and many great views.
- The hamlet of Heinsburg houses a historic water tower and rail station, has access to the river, and is a staging area for the Iron Horse Trail.
- In the hamlet of Lindbergh there are lands next to the river with amazing views and where the historic Carlton Trail and Iron Horse Trail intersect. Though the local salt plant is closed and will be demolished it is also a unique part of the area's history.

- There are fishing outfitters that operate here (Diamondback Charters and Lunkers) and sturgeon can be found in this reach.
- Whitney Lakes Provincial Park is just north of the river and Water Spirit Spa (an existing Indigenous tourism operator) is also nearby.

### Story Map Attractions

The following attractions could be considered for inclusion in tourism-related story maps of the area.

- Fort George and Buckingham House Provincial Historic Site
- Frog Lake National Historic Site
- Iron Horse Trail
- Whitney Lakes Provincial Park

### Action Items

- Develop Heinsburg as a local tourism service hub, with new amenities such as accommodation and food services.
- Establish connections from the Iron Horse Trail to key river access points and attractions along the river to provide additional reasons to visit and additional stopping points for visitors.
- Create itineraries/routes through the region that tie various riverside attractions to sites of interest further 'inland'.
- Create a multi-modal tour loop that uses Elk Point and Heinsburg as key staging points to connect visitors to Fort George and Buckingham House via the river and overland.
- Work with and support Indigenous tourism operators in trip itineraries that include fur trade and colonial era sites (Fort George and Buckingham House and Heinsburg) to tell a complete story for the reach and immerse visitors in its history.
- Create products and itineraries that connect heritage routes and destinations in the area, such as the Carlton Trail and Fort George Buckingham House, to help visitors explore the region's assets and history.
- Attract more winter use of the Iron Horse Trail by developing amenities such as accommodation and food services.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Industry Engagement

#### Methodology

An engagement process was implemented to gather information regarding tourism assets, visitor market opportunities, tourism development readiness, and growth areas for tourism along the North Saskatchewan River. The process began in early February and ran into early March, 2023. 256 Stakeholders from across all eight river reaches were invited to participate. Engagement activities included the following:

- Online survey (22 responses)
- 3 Digital input workshops (9 participants)
- One-on-one interviews (13 participants)

The following organizations participated in the process:

1. Accessible Waters
2. Alberta HUB
3. Beaver Hills Biosphere
4. Brazeau County
5. Ceyana Canoe Club
6. Clearwater County
7. County of Vermilion
8. CottonTail Corner
9. Edmonton and Area Land Trust
10. Edmonton Outdoor Club
11. Explore Nordegg
12. Get Hooked
13. GO East of Edmonton
14. Headway School
15. HeLa Ventures Ltd.
16. Historic Edmonton
17. Nordegg Adventures
18. Northwest Voyageurs Canoe Club
19. Parkland County
20. River Valley Alliance
21. Riverland Recreational Trail Society
22. River Ranch Adventures
23. Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site
24. Saint Paul County
25. Smoky Lake Region
26. Strathcona County
27. Sturgeon County



28. Town of Devon
29. Travel Alberta
30. Travel Lakeland
31. United Albertan Paddling Society
32. Victoria Settlement Provincial Historic Site

#### Opportunities Identified by Stakeholders

- The river and adjacent lands do and can accommodate a wide variety of recreational users and activities, including but not limited to fishing, paddling, hiking, biking, camping, horse riding, snowmobiling and ATViing.
- There are many existing tourism assets to leverage along the river. These include culture and heritage attractions such as Metis Crossing and Fort George Buckingham House, tour operators that provide guided hiking and paddling excursions, as well as existing trail and park infrastructure. Other assets include existing destination management organizations and partnerships such as Travel Lakeland, Explore Edmonton, Explore Nordegg, and David Thompson Country, to name only a few.
- Planned and ongoing investments along different reaches should improve amenities and assets for tourism. These include the River Valley Alliance's plans to complete the last 23km of trails linking Devon to Fort Saskatchewan, Clearwater County's Rocky to Nordegg Trail, and the STEP Region Tourism Opportunity Identification and Destination Development Strategy.
- There are opportunities for a variety of tourism offerings including water-based (e.g. boating, paddling, fishing), trail-based (e.g. walking, cycling, snowshoeing), cultural experiences, and Indigenous tourism. There are also opportunities to connect assets and destinations along the river, for example, Rocky Mountain House National Historic site and Fort Edmonton Park.
- Demand exists for more recreational use in/near the river, and for investment in more types of accommodation to supply existing visitors and attract new ones, including camping, glamping, unique resorts, and higher end retreats.

#### Challenges Identified by Stakeholders

- Environmental sustainability was described by participants as an important consideration for tourism development along the river. Increased tourism and visitation must be balanced with the ecological integrity of the river and surrounding lands.
- There are too few formal access points for launching boats/watercraft, and land costs and the steepness of the valley can make it challenging to develop these.
- There are not enough services and maintenance activities at existing access points, such as washrooms/outhouses, waste removal, parking, and cell phone coverage.
- Many areas are remote and new development is difficult because there is limited or no existing formal infrastructure such as sewer, water, and power.
- There are few transportation options for visitors beyond private vehicles and some areas require all-terrain vehicles to access.
- The river can be dangerous, and users need to be aware of how to use it safely.

- There are too few tourism supporting businesses within the river reaches such as restaurants/food providers, accommodation, and transportation services.
- Funding from and collaboration with and between governments can be difficult to obtain.
- Insurance costs, permitting and other regulatory requirements from multiple agencies are a burden to people developing or operating tourism facilities and businesses.
- Information about how to visit and access the river is limited and outdated, and there is a lack of promotion of existing destinations, amenities and regions.

## Appendix B: Tourism Readiness Assessment - All Reaches

The following provides an overview of Tourism Readiness for the entire study area. Overall, the area is somewhat tourism ready, meaning that while it has significant potential, has many strengths and several core tourism assets in place, there are gaps in tourism products, services and amenities that will require more concerted efforts to address. In addition, there is significant variation in readiness between reaches. See the Tourism Analysis of River Reaches section of this report for commentary on the readiness of each reach.

Criteria / Indicator	Key Findings
SWOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Each reach has assets to build on, including existing and planned river access points, planned and established trails and attractions, tourism businesses (guiding, rentals, accommodations), and organizations supporting tourism.</li> <li>● Some reaches have more developed assets than others.</li> <li>● There are barriers to tourism growth in each reach, which can be overcome with coordinated plans, efforts, and investments.</li> <li>● The health and ecology of the river can be showcased and leveraged to support visitation and sustainability.</li> </ul>
Tourism Service Delivery Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tourism service delivery varies significantly between reaches. Some have limited support services while others are well developed.</li> </ul>
Tourism Asset Inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strengths across reaches include existing outdoor adventure and recreation assets (e.g. river access points and trails), cultural sites and attractions, paddling experiences and opportunities, natural attractions, gateway, and hub communities.</li> <li>● Shared limitations include seasonality of attractions and tour operators, accommodation options, riverside support amenities, festivals and events, culinary attractions and offerings, and visitor information.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Engagement Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stakeholders identified many assets, opportunities, and challenges for tourism along the river. These are described in Appendix A Industry Engagement.</li> </ul>
Market Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There are domestic and international visitor markets that are seeking experiences that the eight reaches can offer. Different reaches can cater to different markets.</li> <li>● Western reaches can be accessed within a half day's drive of Edmonton and Calgary, both of which have international airports. Eastern reaches can be accessed within a few hours' drive of Edmonton.</li> </ul>
Competitive Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There is competition from established nature-based and culture and heritage destinations within the province, such as Kananaskis, the</li> </ul>

	<p>Cowboy Trail, the Badlands, Jasper, and Banff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Western reaches have a growing reputation for less crowded wilderness experiences compared to the national parks.</li><li>● The river provides a platform to tell a unique and authentic story about natural and cultural history, to craft related tourism products and experiences, and to connect individual stories and destinations along its length.</li></ul>
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## **Appendix F: North Saskatchewan River Heritage Research Report - 2022**



# North Saskatchewan River Heritage Research



Cover Image:  
Map of key locations along the  
North Saskatchewan River in Alberta.  
Credit: Know History.

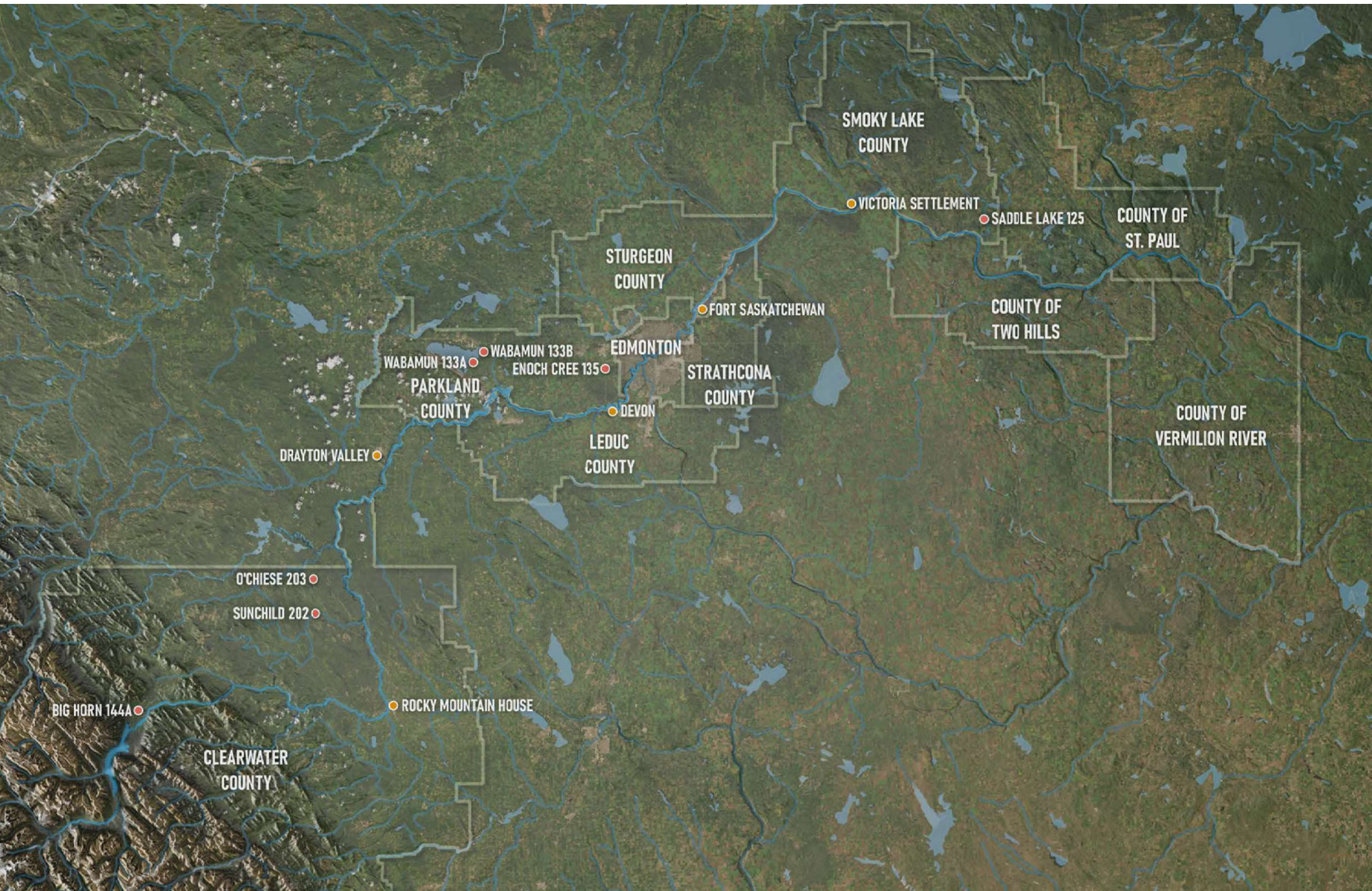
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SMOKY LAKE COUNTY

VICTORIA SETTLEMENT

SADDLE LAKE 125

COUNTY OF ST. PAUL

STURGEON COUNTY

FORT SASKATCHEWAN

COUNTY OF TWO HILLS

WABAMUN 133A  
PARKLAND COUNTY

WABAMUN 133B  
ENOCH CREE 135

EDMONTON

STRATHCONA COUNTY

DEVON

LEDUC COUNTY

COUNTY OF VERMILION RIVER

DRAYTON VALLEY

O'CHIESE 203

SUNCHILD 202

BIG HORN 144A

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

CLEARWATER COUNTY

The North Saskatchewan River where it is now covered by Abraham Lake, pictured in 1924. Credit: Mountain Legacy Project.



# Clearwater County

## Historic Overview

The present-day site of Clearwater County is the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa, Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Stoney Nakoda, Tsuut'ina, Nehiyaw (Cree), and Métis peoples. The region's grasslands, once heavily populated with big game like bison, elk, and deer, were hunting grounds for these nomadic and semi-nomadic groups. The river provided fish to supplement their diets.

The North Saskatchewan River was a transportation corridor through the grasslands and foothills to the Rocky Mountains. For the Ktunaxa, the river was a key passageway between their territory west of the Rocky Mountains and the Kootenay Plains, where they hunted—bison, especially—and traded with other First Nations.

The Stoney Nakoda had a particularly strong presence on the Kootenay Plains, part of which is now covered by Abraham Lake. They established seasonal camps and, later, more permanent cabins, barns, and horse pastures and corrals. The plains also had spiritual and ceremonial importance; the Stoney Nakoda held Sundances, built sweat lodges, and maintained burial sites on the Kootenay Plains.

Fur traders and Europeans reached the Kootenay Plains in the early 1800s by travelling along the North Saskatchewan. David Thompson and Joseph Howse led the first expeditions to cross the mountains at what is now Howse Pass in 1807 and 1809, respectively. However, fur traders had to find a new route after 1810, when the Piikani (part of the Blackfoot Confederacy) warned them against using the pass, which was located on their hunting grounds. Between the foothills and Rocky Mountain House, the North Saskatchewan River remained a primary trade route for both European and Indigenous traders.

European settlement began in the early 1900s, when the ranching and mining industries reached the area. Ranchers like Tom Wilson arrived on the Kootenay Plains, encroaching upon pastures maintained by Stoney Nakoda ranchers. The coal mining industry developed to the east, in what is now Nordegg, in the 1910s. As settlements grew, hunting and fishing tourism began. Both Indigenous peoples and settlers acted as outfitters and guides. Tourists hunted big game, like elk, deer, moose, and bighorn sheep, and fished on the North Saskatchewan and its tributaries.

The course of the North Saskatchewan River was altered in 1972 with the construction of the Bighorn Dam, the first hydroelectric project on the river's main stem. It was constructed in 1972 as part of Calgary Power Ltd.'s efforts to expand its electricity supply. The dam created the Abraham Lake reservoir, which flooded a large portion of the Kootenay Plains and the traditional territory of the Stoney Nakoda. Abraham Lake was named after Silas Abraham, a Stoney rancher and guide, whose traditional land was flooded by the reservoir.

## North Saskatchewan River

Human interaction with the North Saskatchewan River in Clearwater County has included the following:

- ▶ The river was a key transportation route for Indigenous peoples, particularly as the main corridor through the Rocky Mountains.
  - ▶ The Ktunaxa travelled along the North Saskatchewan River between their western territory and the Kootenay Plains, where they hunted and traded.
- ▶ Europeans travelled along the North Saskatchewan River as they began exploring the West.
- ▶ Fur traders paddled the North Saskatchewan River as a trade route to the West.
  - ▶ During the fur trade, the river remained a key route for both Indigenous and European traders.
  - ▶ Indigenous peoples in the western part of the region travelled along the river to trade at Rocky Mountain House.
- ▶ In the twentieth century, the river began to attract tourists, who came to the region to hunt and fish. This led to the development of a tourism and outfitting industry.
- ▶ Bighorn Dam was the first hydroelectric dam on the main stem of the North Saskatchewan River. It manipulates the flow of the North Saskatchewan to maximize power generation and adjust water levels on Abraham Lake.
- ▶ The construction of Bighorn Dam created Abraham Lake, a 13,700-acre reservoir. The lake is now a popular destination for hikers and tourists; however, the water is too rough for boating and other recreational use.

## Archival Assets

The following table provides a list of archival collections that contain additional information on this region of the North Saskatchewan River.

Archive & Fonds	Date	Extent & Description
<b>R. E. Taylor fonds</b> Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies	1971-1975	Contains 17 photographs of Bighorn Dam, Abraham Lake, and the Tom Wilson cabin at Kootenay Plains. The photographs were taken in the early 1970s by Calgary Power employee R. E. Taylor.
<b>Tom Wilson family fonds</b> Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies	1861-1982	Includes photographs and textual records created and collected by the Wilson family. Tom Wilson and his sons were guides, outfitters, and ranchers in Kootenay Plains, Nordegg, Banff, and Morley between the 1880s and mid-1900s. The fonds contains approximately 400 photographs, including of the Kootenay Plains, Nordegg region, and Stoney peoples.
<b>Whyte Museum Oral History Programme collection</b> Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies	1967-1989	A collection of oral history interviews and other recordings conducted and collected by the Whyte Museum.
<b>Calgary Power Company Ltd. Fonds</b> Glenbow Archives	1886-1960	Consists of textual and photographic material created by Calgary Power Ltd. (now TransAlta Utilities Corporation). Includes photographs and slides of power plant and dam construction.
<b>Tom Wilson fonds</b> Glenbow Archives	1879-1954	Includes textual and photographic records created and collected by Tom Wilson, an American-born rancher and guide, who settled on the Kootenay Plains in the 1880s. The collection of 210 photographs consists largely of images of Stoney peoples on the Kootenay Plains.
<b>Geodetic Survey of Canada sous-fonds</b> Library and Archives Canada (digitized by the Mountain Legacy Project)	1888-1958	Consists of more than 57,000 photographs, prints, and glass plate negatives collected during Dominion Land surveys, primarily in Alberta and British Columbia. Many of these photographs have been digitized by the Mountain Legacy Project, where you can search by location and compare historical and contemporary views.

# Digital Assets

The following images offer a sample of available graphic material relating to the history of the North Saskatchewan River in this region.



Figure 1. Horses pasturing on Kootenay Plains, ca. 1905-1914. Credit: Elliott Barnes. Elliott Barnes fonds, V48 / NG - 5, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies.



Figure 2. The North Saskatchewan River where it is now covered by Abraham Lake, pictured in 1924. Credit: Mountain Legacy Project.



Figure 3. The North Saskatchewan River where it is now covered by Abraham Lake, pictured in 1924. Credit: Mountain Legacy Project.



Figure 4. Tom Wilson's trading post on the Kootenay Plains near what is now Abraham Lake, ca. 1903-1911. Credit: Glenbow Archives, NA-696-1.



Figure 5. Geological surveyor D.B. Dowling's pack horse team fording the North Saskatchewan, east of the Kootenay Plains. Dowling completed a 1907 survey of coal deposits in Alberta. Credit: Glenbow Archives / NA-5711-8.



Figure 6. Silas Abraham, after whom Abraham Lake was named. Credit: Glenbow Archives / NA-4212-13.

Ruins of Rocky Mountain House from the south side of the Saskatchewan River, 1884. Credit: Geological Survey of Canada / Library and Archives Canada / PA-038031.



# Rocky Mountain House

## Historic Overview

Rocky Mountain House sits on the traditional territory of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Stoney Nakoda, Tsuut'ina, Cree, and Saulteaux peoples. The river valley and surrounding plains, once heavily populated with bison, were part of these groups' traditional hunting grounds. By the 1700s, the Piikani, part of the Blackfoot Confederacy, were the dominant nation in the area.

The fur trade at Rocky Mountain House began in 1799, when both the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company established posts—Rocky Mountain House and Acton House, respectively—at the confluence of the North Saskatchewan and Clearwater rivers. The posts were strategically located to attract trade with the Ktunaxa, whose territory had a large beaver population. However, the Piikani blocked the route between Rocky Mountain House and the Kootenays. Both posts were closed in 1802, but opened in 1805, with the Piikani becoming their primary trading partners.

As the westernmost fur trade post, Rocky Mountain House became a base for traders and explorers travelling west to the foothills and Rocky Mountains. Explorer David Thompson lived at Rocky Mountain House for several years. From there, he launched his travel expeditions, including his 1807 expedition through the Rocky Mountains, travelling along the North Saskatchewan River to Howse Pass.

The North West Company closed Rocky Mountain House again in 1807 after Thompson established Kootenae House in the Columbia Basin. Growing violence in the region led the Hudson's Bay Company to follow suit. Both posts reopened in 1819 and, in 1821, became one post under the name Rocky Mountain House following the merger of the North West and Hudson's Bay companies. Rocky Mountain House continued to close and reopen in response to trading conditions and the demand for furs.

In 1835, a new post was constructed near the site of the original. It remained in operation until 1861, when it was abandoned after the depletion of resources in the area led to the starvation of the post's inhabitants. In 1864, the Hudson's Bay Company tasked chief trader Richard C. Hardisty with reestablishing Rocky Mountain House. The post was active for another ten years before it was permanently closed in 1875.

During the fur trade, Rocky Mountain House's location on the North Saskatchewan River made it a major boat-building centre. Canoes and York boats were constructed at Rocky Mountain House to carry supplies and transport furs east to Hudson Bay.

Rocky Mountain House is also part of the Métis Homeland. Métis employed by the Hudson's Bay and North West companies lived and worked at the post and raised families there. As skilled boat builders, Métis likely participated in building canoes and York boats. After Rocky Mountain House closed, Métis families continued to live near the old post until the land was bought by the Brierley family, who began farming the land in the 1920s.

European settlement of Rocky Mountain House began in 1906. Settlers took advantage of free land to establish farms and found work at logging camps and lumber mills. In 1910, the Alberta Central Railway and Canadian Northern Railway began to lay tracks that would create access to the newly-discovered coalfields near Nordegg. Alberta Central Railway (which was bought out by Canadian Pacific in 1912) laid the bridge across the North Saskatchewan River the same year.

Settlement continued to grow after the completion of the railroad enabled the growth of coal mining at Nordegg and continued investigations into nearby oilfields. Farming and logging were the primary industries at Rocky Mountain House into the latter half of the twentieth century.

Approximately 30 kilometres northwest of Rocky Mountain House, near the junction of the North Saskatchewan and Baptiste rivers, is the community of Baptiste River. From the 1930s to 1945, Baptiste River was a Métis settlement occupied by the extended Fleury family. It consisted of five cabins, two outbuildings, and a shared barn. The family was forced to move to the Crimson Lake area in 1945 after Alberta began pushing Indigenous peoples off Crown lands.

## North Saskatchewan River

Human interaction with the North Saskatchewan River in the Rocky Mountain House area has included the following:

- ▶ The Piikani camped along the banks of the North Saskatchewan, especially in winter. In the spring and fall, they hunted bison on the surrounding plains.
- ▶ The Piikani travelled by horseback on trails along the North Saskatchewan and Clearwater rivers near Rocky Mountain House.
- ▶ Bison were plentiful in river valleys like the North Saskatchewan, making the region around Rocky Mountain House suitable for the First Nations and Métis bison hunt.
- ▶ Rocky Mountain House became a major boat-building centre during the fur trade. Its location along the North Saskatchewan, a critical artery, was ideal for constructing and deploying canoes and York boats. Boats were loaded with supplies or furs, bound for Hudson Bay and, from there, Europe. The journey from Rocky Mountain House to Hudson Bay via York boat took about three months.
- ▶ The North Saskatchewan River made Rocky Mountain House a suitable launching point for traders and travellers like David Thompson as they sought to expand their reach further west.
- ▶ Before ferries and bridges, travelling from Rocky Mountain House across the North Saskatchewan River was a dangerous task. The river was forded by foot or horse, and fur traders and other Europeans relied on First Nations guides to help them cross safely.
- ▶ Lumber was floated along the river as the logging and lumber industries began in the early 1900s.
- ▶ Settlers at Rocky Mountain House and the surrounding area crossed the North Saskatchewan by ferry from 1909 until the 1940s. The ferry was used to transport people, livestock, mail, and supplies.
  - ▶ Crossing the river was sometimes impossible for days at a time; the ferry could not run when water levels were too low, or when broken ice was present in spring and fall.
  - ▶ In 1935, the ferry cable broke, and the ferry was swept more than a kilometre down the river, where it became lodged in a sandbar. Returning the ferry to the wharf was an arduous task. A road had to be cleared along the river bank and through the forest before the ferry could be towed back by horses. It took another two weeks for a replacement cable to arrive from Ontario, leaving farmers and lumber workers without transportation.
- ▶ To commemorate Canada's centennial, and in recognition of the site's significance during the fur trade, Rocky Mountain House was the launching point of a 5,000 km canoe race in 1967. The Centennial Canoe Pageant terminated in Montreal.

## Archival Assets

The following table provides a list of archival collections that contain additional information on this region of the North Saskatchewan River.

Archive & Fonds	Date	Extent & Description
<b>Hudson's Bay Company, Rocky Mountain House</b> Hudson's Bay Company Archives	1799-1985	Records pertaining to the Hudson's Bay Company post at Rocky Mountain House. Includes post journals and account books.
<b>Richard C. Hardisty fonds</b> Glenbow Archives	1825-1958	Consists of Hudson's Bay Company and personal correspondence of HBC clerk and chief trader Richard C. Hardisty. Hardisty was responsible for reestablishing Rocky Mountain House in 1864. Fonds includes several series of correspondence and other records relating to Rocky Mountain House.
<b>Henry Stelfox fonds</b> Glenbow Archives	1940-1972	Consists of textual records created by Henry Stelfox, a nature conservationist who settled at Rocky Mountain House in 1920. Fonds contains essays and notes on Rocky Mountain House and the Indigenous peoples and settlers who lived there.
<b>Mabel Fleming fonds</b> Glenbow Archives	1906-1922	Textual and photographic records created by Mabel Fleming, the first schoolteacher in Rocky Mountain House. Includes photographs of Rocky Mountain House.
<b>Canadian National Railway Company fonds</b> Provincial Archives of Alberta	1897-1999	Consists of textual, photographic, and cartographic records created by the Canadian National Railway and its predecessors.
<b>Canadian National Railway fonds</b> Library and Archives Canada	1825-1990s	Contains textual, photographic, and cartographic material created and maintained by Canadian National Railway and its predecessors.

## Digital Assets

The following images offer a sample of available graphic material relating to the history of the North Saskatchewan River in this region.



Figure 7. The North Saskatchewan River near Rocky Mountain House, circa 1905-1930. Credit: Peel's Prairie Provinces / Prairie Postcards Collection / PC010879.



Figure 8. The North Saskatchewan River and bridge, Rocky Mountain House, before 1920. Credit: Peel's Prairie Provinces / Prairie Postcards Collection / PC004774.





Figure 9. Remnants of chimneys at the Hudson's Bay Company Rocky Mountain House post, taken in 1905. Credit: Elliott Barnes / Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies / V48 / NA-22.



Figure 10. Group of Piikani at Rocky Mountain House with Priest Jean l'Heureux, 1872. Credit: Charles Horetzky / D.M. Beach Old & Rare Books Collection / Library and Archives Canada / e011308320.



Figure 12. Ruins of Rocky Mountain House from the south side of the Saskatchewan River, 1884. Credit: Geological Survey of Canada / Library and Archives Canada / PA-038031.



Figure 11. View of Rocky Mountain House, Alberta. Sketch by Jean l'Heureux, 1873. Credit: Glenbow Archives / NA-577-2.



Figure 13. Lantern slide showing Rocky Mountain House circa 1886. Credit: Mary Schaffer / Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, V527 / PS 1-602.



Figure 14. Alberta Central Railway surveyors crossing river near Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, 1910. Credit: Glenbow Archives / NA-4093-8.



Figure 15. Ferry over North Saskatchewan River, Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, circa 1913-1914. Credit: Glenbow Archives / NA-4093-23.



Figure 16. Voyageur Canoe Pageant on their way to Expo 67, from Rocky Mountain House to Montreal. Credit: Frank Grant / Library and Archives Canada / PA-185522.

Construction of the bridge over the North Saskatchewan at Drayton Valley, circa 1956. Credit: Drayton Valley Museum.



# Drayton Valley

## Historic Overview

Drayton Valley is located on the traditional territory of the Tsuut'ina, Plains Cree, Stoney, Cree, and Métis. Once populated with thick forests, it may have been a camping spot during hunting trips on the nearby plains, or during travel along the North Saskatchewan.

European explorers and fur traders passed Drayton Valley on their western route along the North Saskatchewan. In 1800, the North West Company established a post at Boggy Hall, approximately 20 kilometres southwest of Drayton Valley. The post was abandoned eight years later.

In 1810, David Thompson travelled to Boggy Hall on his second expedition to the Rocky Mountains. It was near here that he was intercepted by a Piikani blockade. Fearing violence, Thompson turned around and was forced to take an alternate route from his 1807 expedition, this time crossing the Rockies at the Athabasca Pass.

It was nearly 100 years later that settlement in Drayton Valley began. The growth of the lumber industry in the early 1900s brought loggers to the region. As the settlement grew during the early logging days, the town of Drayton Valley became known as "Power House." It was named for an intended hydroelectric dam, planned to be installed just south of the present townsite. The plan was cancelled after the First World War broke out.

By the 1930s, there were 30 lumber camps near Drayton Valley. Lumber harvested at these camps was transported downstream along the North Saskatchewan River to be processed at sawmills in Edmonton. The lumber industry remained the dominant trade in Drayton Valley until forests were largely depleted by 1945.

Farming replaced logging as the region's primary industry until 1953, when oil was discovered southwest of Drayton Valley, just above the North Saskatchewan. The Pembina oil field was the province's biggest oil discovery to date and attracted a large influx of workers. The town grew significantly, and roads and bridges were built to accommodate the rising population and industrial demand. Oil remains the predominant industry in the region.

## North Saskatchewan River

Human interaction with the North Saskatchewan River in Drayton Valley has included the following:

- ◆ Indigenous peoples used the river for transportation and sustenance.
- ◆ Europeans and fur traders travelled along the river to reach the Rocky Mountains.
- ◆ From the 1900s to 1920s, trappers shipped their furs to Edmonton on rafts.
- ◆ Lumber harvested in the Drayton Valley region from the early 1900s to the 1940s was transported downstream to Edmonton via the North Saskatchewan River.
- ◆ Until the 1960s, people living in Drayton Valley crossed the North Saskatchewan by ferry or by ice bridge. The nearest ferry to the town of Drayton Valley was the Berry Moor Ferry near Tomahawk. After the Pembina oil field was discovered in 1953, Drayton Valley built its own ferry to keep up with demand.
- ◆ In the 1950s, people drove to the riverbank to wash their vehicles. Drayton Valley only had dirt roads, so vehicles grew very muddy. They often became stuck on their way to the river.
- ◆ The discovery of oil near Drayton Valley brought a surge of settlers to the area. Insufficient transportation into and out of the area led to the construction of a bridge over the North Saskatchewan River in 1956. The bridge was completed in 1958.
- ◆ Construction of the Brazeau storage and hydroelectric dam occurred in the 1960s. The dam was built on the Brazeau River near the confluence with the North Saskatchewan.
- ◆ The Brazeau Dam created the Brazeau Reservoir, which is now used as a recreational lake for boating and fishing.

## Archival Assets

The following table provides a list of archival collections that contain additional information on this region of the North Saskatchewan River.

Archive & Fonds	Date	Extent & Description
<b>Alfred Rathgeber fonds</b> Provincial Archives of Alberta	c. 1940-1955	Fonds consists of photographs of lumber operations in the Drayton Valley region, including sawmills at Alder Flats, Wenham Valley, and on Sunchild First Nation Reserve #202. Includes photographs of bridge construction on the North Saskatchewan, above the Brazeau River.
<b>Audio Visual and Exhibit Services files, Public Affairs Bureau sous-fonds</b> Provincial Archives of Alberta	1936-1998	Contains textual and audiovisual records created and collected by Alberta's Public Affairs Bureau. Series includes photographs of Brazeau Dam and its construction.
<b>Marvin C. Coombs fonds</b> Provincial Archives of Alberta	1929-1962	Consists of records created and collected by Marvin C. Coombs, an amateur historian of the Drayton Valley area. Contains 19 photographs, including of paddle steamers in the region.
<b>W. S. B. Loosmore collection</b> Provincial Archives of Alberta	1986-2014	Photographic collection of Dr. W. S. B. Loosmore, a medical doctor who moved to Drayton Valley in 1976. Contains 584 photographs and 886 photographic negatives of the Drayton Valley region.
<b>Drayton Valley Museum</b>	N/A	The Drayton Valley Museum does not have an online finding aid or collections list; however, the museum frequently shares photographs online and should have a sizable collection available.
<b>Calgary Power Company Ltd. Fonds</b> Glenbow Archives	1886-1960	Consists of textual and photographic material created by Calgary Power Ltd. (now TransAlta Utilities Corporation). Includes photographs and slides of power plant and dam construction.

## Digital Assets

The following images offer a sample of available graphic material relating to the history of the North Saskatchewan River in this region.



Figure 17. View of the North Saskatchewan River east of Rocky Rapids, Alberta, circa 1930s. Credit: Glenbow Archives / NA-2991-7.



Figure 18. Construction of the bridge over the North Saskatchewan at Drayton Valley, circa 1956. Credit: Drayton Valley Museum.

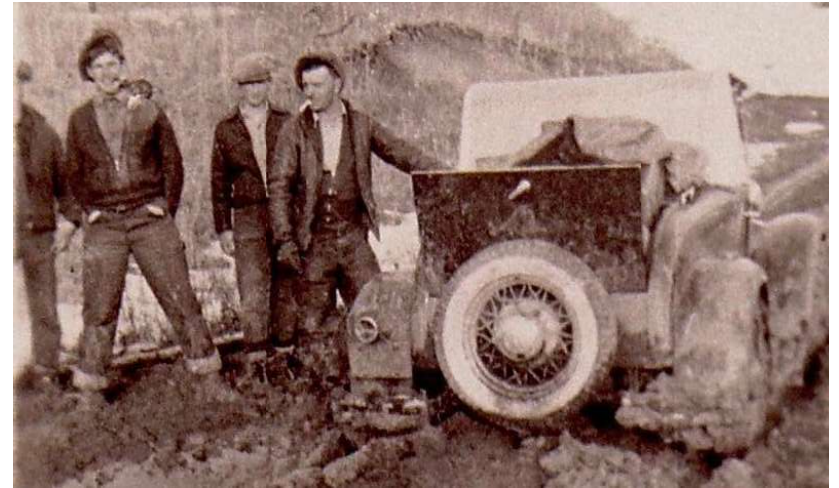


Figure 19. In the 1950s, people living in Drayton Valley would drive their cars down to the river to wash them. Dirt roads meant that cars became very dirty but also frequently got stuck on their way to be washed. Credit: Drayton Valley Museum.



Figure 20. Aerial view of the Brazeau River hydroelectric dam, circa 1960s. Credit: Glenbow Archives / PA-1864-468.

Lumberman J. A. L. MacDougall [McDougall] pulling on a rafting oar. Credit: Provincial Archives of Alberta / A5493.



# Parkland and Leduc Counties

## Historic Overview

Parkland and Leduc counties are located on the traditional territory of the Plains Cree, Stoney, Tsuut'ina, and Cree peoples, as well as the Métis Homeland. Due to their location on the North Saskatchewan, Indigenous groups likely would have passed through these counties as they travelled along the river to Edmonton, a traditional gathering place.

The fur trade reached the region in the eighteenth century, as Europeans sought to expand westward. Edmonton grew into a trading hub, and traders travelled along this stretch of the North Saskatchewan on their way to western posts and the Rocky Mountains. First Nations and Métis also travelled and camped along the river when they came to trade at Edmonton.

Because there was a large fort at Edmonton, there were only small outposts located in this region of the North Saskatchewan River. As early as 1808, Fort Muskey—also known as Quagmire Hall—was established by the North West Company near the present site of Berrymoor. The post was abandoned by 1811.

Homesteading began in the late 1800s. In addition to farming, the primary industries from the late 1800s to mid-1900s were logging and coal mining. Coal towns emerged at Wabamun and Genesee, and coal-fired power generating stations were established at Genesee and Keephills.

In 1947, the discovery of oil at Leduc transformed the region's industrial landscape. This marked the beginning of Alberta's oil boom and substantially increased the region's population, as workers travelled to the counties seeking employment in the oil industry. It changed the economic base of First Nations like Enoch Cree Nation, which had previously relied on farming. Oil and gas revenues from wells drilled on their reserve became a major source of funding. However, some First Nations did not have easy access to revenues and experienced fewer benefits from oil drilling on and near their reserve lands.

## North Saskatchewan River

Human interaction with the North Saskatchewan River in Parkland and Leduc counties has included the following:

- ▶ The North Saskatchewan River provided food, water, and transportation for Indigenous peoples.
- ▶ Fur traders travelled from Edmonton to the Rocky Mountains along this portion of the North Saskatchewan. While it was mainly a travel route, there were several trading posts along the way.
  - ▶ Quagmire Hall, a North West Company fort, was located approximately 1.5 km west of Berrymoor. David Thompson referred to it as Fort Muskey when he passed the site in 1808. Quagmire Hall was abandoned by 1811.
- ▶ Farmers, lumber workers, and other settlers relied on ferries as their primary means of crossing the river from the early 1900s to the 1970s.
  - ▶ In this region of the North Saskatchewan River, there were ferry crossings at Genesee and at Berrymoor near Tomahawk. Both were operated by the province. The Berrymoor ferry was opened around 1916. The Genesee ferry opened in 1917 and was known as Fraser's Landing for its first seven years of operation.
  - ▶ In the early 1900s, the region also had privately-operated ferries. Timberman Charlie Cropley built a scow in 1906 and ferried passengers across an old river fording site on the trail to Lac Ste. Anne. In 1910, Cropley installed a cable ferry. Downstream, the Scheideman family operated a private ferry from their homestead.
  - ▶ By the 1980s, bridges had largely replaced ferries. The Berrymoor ferry, closed in the early 1980s, was the last ferry operating on the Alberta portion of the North Saskatchewan River. The bridge that replaced the Berrymoor opened in the fall of 1982.
- ▶ Lumber harvested in this region was transported downstream to sawmills in Edmonton.
  - ▶ Along the river, structures were built to contain the log booms. Around Burtonsville Island, however, the river's naturally occurring snyes (side channels in the river) were used to hold log booms in place.
- ▶ During the Great Depression, people panned for gold along the North Saskatchewan in hopes of locating gold they could sell or trade for groceries.
- ▶ Since the 1970s and 1980s, the river has provided water for coal mining and coal-fired power production in the region.
  - ▶ Water is required to extract and wash coal.
  - ▶ Water from the North Saskatchewan is used for the artificial cooling ponds at Genesee Generating Station, Keephills Power Plant, and Sundance Power Plant.

- ▶ Since the first provincial natural areas were established in the 1960s, people have used these areas for recreational use, including canoeing and camping. There are five provincial natural areas located along the North Saskatchewan River in this region: Modeste Creek, Modeste Saskatchewan, Coyote Lake, St. Francis, and Burtonsville Island.

## Archival Assets

The following table provides a list of archival collections that contain additional information on this region of the North Saskatchewan River.

Archive & Fonds	Date	Extent & Description
<b>J. A. L. McDougall family fonds</b> City of Edmonton Archives	1890-1926	Consists of the business and family records of lumberman John A. L. McDougall. McDougall's business operated in Edmonton, Telfordville, and Keephills. Fonds includes photographs of lumbering in these areas of the North Saskatchewan River.
<b>Northern Alberta Pioneers and Old Timers' Association fonds</b> City of Edmonton Archives	1885-2009	Consists of records created and collected by the Northern Alberta Pioneers and Old Timers' Association. Includes textual and photographic records.
<b>Imperial Oil Limited fonds</b> Glenbow Archives	1860-2014	Consists of textual records, photographs, and audiovisual recordings created by and documenting the operations of Imperial Oil Limited. Includes records on the company's operations in western Canada.
<b>Canadian Energy Museum</b>	Unknown	While the Canadian Energy Museum does not provide an online summary of its collections, it holds records on the Leduc oil discovery.
<b>Charles William Jefferys fonds</b> Library and Archives Canada	1880-1958	Consists of graphic and textual records created and collected by illustrator Charles William Jefferys. Contains two Imperial Oil collections, which include photographs and illustrations.

## Digital Assets

The following images offer a sample of available graphic material relating to the history of the North Saskatchewan River in this region.



Figure 21. Lumberman J. A. L. MacDougall [McDougall] pulling on a rafting oar. Credit: Provincial Archives of Alberta / A5493.



Figure 22. Logging raft on North Saskatchewan River, circa 1907. Credit: City of Edmonton Archives / EA-34-16.

Out-of-control blowout at Atlantic No. 3, Devon, Alberta, 1948. Credit: Provincial Archives of Alberta / KS66/6.



## Town of Devon

### Historic Overview

The town of Devon is located on the traditional territory of the Plains Cree, Stoney, Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Tsuut'ina, Cree, and Métis peoples. For generations, the Stoney and Niitsitapi travelled across the region, following bison herds. The fur trade brought Cree and Métis to the area, as well as European traders.

The 1795 establishment of Fort Edmonton by the Hudson's Bay Company and Fort Augustus by the North West Company marked the beginning of the fur trade in the region. While there were no known trading posts where Devon is now located, both traders and Indigenous peoples would have travelled along the North Saskatchewan River past Devon to reach Edmonton.

After the fur trade declined, farming—mainly wheat—became the region's primary industry. Homesteaders arrived in the 1890s, drawn by Canada's western settlement efforts. Many of these homesteaders came from what is now Ukraine.

On February 13, 1947, the Leduc No. 1 oil well was discovered by a team of Imperial Oil seismologists. The discovery led to the town of Devon's establishment. Knowing that existing communities near Leduc could not accommodate the anticipated increase in oil workers, Imperial Oil decided to build a new town. Devon was carefully planned by Imperial Oil and a regional planning committee, gaining the nickname of "Canada's Model Town." Within a year, prefabricated homes were erected, businesses established, and infrastructure built.

The discovery of Leduc No. 1 ushered in Alberta's modern oil industry, transforming the province's—and the Devon region's—economic and physical landscapes. Leduc No. 1 was active until 1974.



## North Saskatchewan River

Human interaction with the North Saskatchewan River in the Devon area has included the following:

- ▶ The Stoney and Niisitapi hunted bison herds throughout the river valley.
- ▶ After the fur trade reached Edmonton in 1795, this portion of the North Saskatchewan would have provided travel for traders pushing west, and for First Nations and Métis travelling to and from Fort Edmonton to trade.
- ▶ The river provided irrigation water for farmers.
- ▶ The North Saskatchewan River provides water for the Town of Devon.
  - ▶ The town's water system included a pumping station that could be hauled up the riverbank during high water periods.
- ▶ Residents of the new town of Devon worried that their children would want to swim in the North Saskatchewan River. To provide an alternative, the town built a large community swimming pool in 1949.
- ▶ Devon residents crossed the North Saskatchewan by ferry during the town's first years.
- ▶ In spring of 1951, a bridge crossing the North Saskatchewan was completed.
- ▶ In 1948, a pipeline was installed across the river, linking the Leduc No. 1 oil well with the Nisku pipeline that already linked the Woodbend oil well with Edmonton.
- ▶ Water from the North Saskatchewan River was used to quell a six-month disaster at the Atlantic No. 3 oil well near Leduc.
  - ▶ On March 8, 1948, a 150-foot blast of oil burst upwards from the well. Atlantic No. 3 thus became a "wild well," with massive amounts of oil and natural gas escaping. For six months, water from the North Saskatchewan was pumped into relief wells designed to reduce the threat of fire.
  - ▶ However, fire did break out. On September 6, 1948, the wild well ignited. The fire raged for two months. During this time, water was pumped from the North Saskatchewan to quell the flames.
- ▶ Panning for gold on the North Saskatchewan was popular at various points in time.
  - ▶ In 1950, even after the oil boom, people panned for gold as a way to make a living or supplement income.
  - ▶ During construction of the bridge in 1951, former farmhand Thomas Staley panned for gold in the gravel being used for construction. He found about an ounce each day.

- ▶ Beginning in 1950, the Voyageurs Canoe Club of Edmonton hosted an annual canoe race down the North Saskatchewan, from the Devon ferry to Edmonton's Fifth Street Bridge.
- ▶ The Sourdough Raft Race, part of Edmonton's annual Klondike Days, began in 1960. The race began in Devon, where contestants built log rafts before racing them up the river to Edmonton.

## Archival Assets

The following table provides a list of archival collections that contain additional information on this region of the North Saskatchewan River.

Archive & Fonds	Date	Extent & Description
<b>Imperial Oil Limited fonds</b> Glenbow Archives	1860-2014	Consists of textual records, photographs, and audiovisual recordings created by and documenting the operations of Imperial Oil Limited. Includes records on the company's operations in western Canada.
<b>Canadian Energy Museum</b>	Unknown	While the Canadian Energy Museum does not provide an online summary of its collections, it likely holds records on the Leduc oil discovery and the founding of Devon.
<b>Charles William Jefferys fonds</b> Library and Archives Canada	1880-1958	Consists of graphic and textual records created and collected by historical illustrator Charles William Jefferys. Contains two Imperial Oil collections, which include photographs and illustrations.
<b>Devon Dispatch</b> Library and Archives Canada	1976-present	Archived issues of the Devon Dispatch newspaper, which began in 1976.

# Digital Assets

The following images offer a sample of available graphic material relating to the history of the North Saskatchewan River in this region.



Figure 23. Imperial Leduc No. 1, pictured on February 13, 1947, the day oil was discovered. Credit: Henry Pollard / Provincial Archives of Alberta / P2732.



Figure 24. Thomas Staley panning for gold on the North Saskatchewan near Devon, 1950. Credit: Calgary Herald / September 27, 1950.



Figure 25. Welding truck constructing two 8-inch lines from Nisku to Devon Field, Leduc, Alberta, circa 1947. Credit: Glenbow Archives / PA-3027-8.



Figure 26. Mayor George Thompson examining a wall map of Devon, summer 1951. Credit: Glenbow Archives / IP-14a-9535.



Figure 29. Preparing ice on the North Saskatchewan River at the Devon ferry for car crossing, December 1949. Credit: City of Edmonton Archives / EA-600-3473.



Figure 27. Proposed plan of the townsite of Devon, Alberta, circa 1947. Credit: Glenbow Archives / IP-6k-35.



Figure 30. Bridge crossing the North Saskatchewan River on highway between Edmonton and Devon, Alberta, circa summer 1951. Credit: Glenbow Archives / IP-14a-9530.



Figure 28. Voyagers Canoe Club members paddle from Devon to Edmonton during the first annual canoe race, June 1950. Credit: City of Edmonton Archives / EA-600-4554.



Figure 31. Construction of the new Devon bridge over the North Saskatchewan, October 1950. Credit: City of Edmonton Archives / EA-600-6016b.

Man washing gold at Edmonton, 1890. Credit: Library and Archives Canada / Ernest Brown fonds / e011303100-040.



# Edmonton

## Historic Overview

For thousands of years, Edmonton has been inhabited by First Nations, including the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Cree, Nakoda, Anishinaabe, and Dene. These Nations were semi-nomadic, following the bison hunt across the plains. Edmonton, and the wider Beaver Hills region, was a traditional gathering place where First Nations camped, hunted, traded, and conducted ceremonies.

Europeans arrived in the late eighteenth century as the fur trade expanded west. In 1795, at the present site of Fort Saskatchewan, the North West and Hudson's Bay companies established rival forts. Both companies relocated to Edmonton's Rosedale Flats area in 1802. The forts remained there until warfare between Cree, Nakota, and Blackfoot tribes forced their temporary relocation to Smoky Lake from 1810 to 1813. In 1830, Fort Edmonton—now a single fort owned by the Hudson's Bay Company following its amalgamation of the North West Company—moved to its final location at the present-day site of the Alberta Legislature Building. At all locations, the proximity to the river was essential for traders and Indigenous peoples to reach the site.

During the fur trade era, First Nations and Métis camped along the river when coming to trade at Fort Edmonton. Métis began to settle more permanently around Fort Edmonton in the late 1830s, establishing farms on river lots on both sides of the North Saskatchewan. Many Métis lost these river lots when the Canadian government began surveying the land for settlement, using the scrip system to extinguish Métis title to these lots. The government maintained the river lot system when assigning land to homesteaders.

Settlement grew slowly until the Canadian Northern Railway arrived in 1905, after which point the population quickly rose. Agriculture remained Edmonton's predominant industry until the mid-twentieth century. When oil was discovered in the region in the late 1940s, oil refinement became a major industry. The city also became a strategic centre for northern military operations. The construction of an international airport in 1955 made Edmonton a major transport centre for both cargo (especially to northern communities) and passengers.

# North Saskatchewan River

Human interaction with the North Saskatchewan River in the Edmonton area has included the following:

- ▶ Archaeologists have determined that ancient peoples camped along the bend in the river where Edmonton lies. These peoples camped on the river flats, where they could fish at spawning sites near creeks and gather rocks and stones to fashion tools and weapons.
- ▶ Edmonton was a traditional gathering place for many Indigenous peoples living in the region. The river provided transportation for those travelling by canoe.
- ▶ Rosedale Flats was a sacred site for First Nations in the region, and a burial site for those living at or near Fort Edmonton. It is also known as Edmonton's birthplace, as it became the new site of Fort Edmonton in 1802. One hundred years later, in 1902, it became the new site of Edmonton's only electrical generating station, known as the Rosedale Power Plant.
- ▶ Fort Edmonton's location was selected for its placement along the North Saskatchewan, as the river was a fur trade route between the West and Hudson Bay.
- ▶ First Nations and Métis camped on the river flats when they came to Fort Edmonton to trade.
- ▶ Traders at Fort Edmonton relied on the river for sustenance.
  - ▶ Fish from the river supplied food to those living at the fort.
  - ▶ Waterfowl living along the river was another source of food.
  - ▶ Grains grown along the river were processed at Fort Edmonton's grist mill.
- ▶ The river was used for recreation by those living at Fort Edmonton.
  - ▶ Toboggan slides were held on the river.
  - ▶ Dog-train races were held along a three-mile stretch of the river.
- ▶ Proximity to the river influenced the types of industry that developed in early Edmonton.
  - ▶ Its location along the fur trade highway of the North Saskatchewan made Edmonton a suitable place for Hudson's Bay and North West Company forts.
  - ▶ Sawmills were established on the river flats, where mills could access timber floated on the river from locations upstream. Processed lumber could be shipped out on the river as well.
  - ▶ Boatbuilders and larger boatbuilding companies operated on the river flats.
  - ▶ Brickyards took advantage of clay deposits on the riverbanks to produce and sell bricks.

- ▶ Coal seams present in the river valley led to a large coal-mining industry. Coal was also used in power plants built near the river.
- ▶ Tanneries used river water in leather production.
- ▶ Edmonton experienced a small gold rush on the North Saskatchewan River from the 1860s to 1890s. In addition to panning for gold, wealthier commercial prospectors operated steam-powered gold dredges along the river.
- ▶ Flooding on the North Saskatchewan influenced settlement in the Edmonton region.
  - ▶ In 1829, a flood destroyed Fort Edmonton. When rebuilt, the fort was moved to higher ground at the present-day site of the Alberta Legislature Building.
  - ▶ Edmonton Power and Light Company's powerplant was flooded in 1899. After a second, smaller flood the following year, the company decided to move the plant to higher ground.
  - ▶ In 1915, a historic flood inundated much of the river flats surrounding Edmonton, destroying homes and business and displacing an estimated 2,000 people.
  - ▶ Both scow and steamboat ferries were the primary means of crossing the North Saskatchewan River between Strathcona and Edmonton from the late 1800s until 1913 when the High Level Bridge was constructed.
- ▶ Canoe and raft races were held on the river during the annual Klondike Days summer festival, which began in the 1960s.
  - ▶ The Sourdough Raft Race began in 1960. Contestants would meet at Devon to build log rafts, which they then raced up the river to Edmonton. By the 1970s, the rafts were much more elaborate, and the race drew hundreds of participants each year.

## Archival Assets

The following table provides a list of archival collections that contain additional information on this region of the North Saskatchewan River.

Archive & Fonds	Date	Extent & Description
<b>Hudson's Bay Company, Edmonton</b> Hudson's Bay Company Archives	1795-1938	Records pertaining to the Hudson's Bay Company's Edmonton post. Records include post journals, correspondence books, account books, and district reports.
<b>Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee fonds</b> City of Edmonton Archives	2003-2004	Contains audio, textual, and photographic records created during the Rosedale Flats Aboriginal Oral History Project. Includes copies of 27 interviews conducted with Elders and other community members discussing the significance of the Rosedale Flats site on the north shore of the river.
<b>Northern Alberta Pioneers and Old Timers' Association fonds</b> City of Edmonton Archives	1885-2009	Consists of records created and collected by the Northern Alberta Pioneers and Old Timers' Association. Includes textual and photographic records.
<b>Thomas Walker fonds</b> City of Edmonton Archives	1915	Consists of photographs taken by Thomas Walker during the 1915 flood of the North Saskatchewan River.
<b>Ernest Brown fonds</b> Provincial Archives of Alberta	1759-1965; 1880-1960	Contains 11,000 photographs captured or collected by photographer Ernest Brown. Includes photographs of early settlement near Edmonton.

## Digital Assets

The following images offer a sample of available graphic material relating to the history of the North Saskatchewan River in this region.

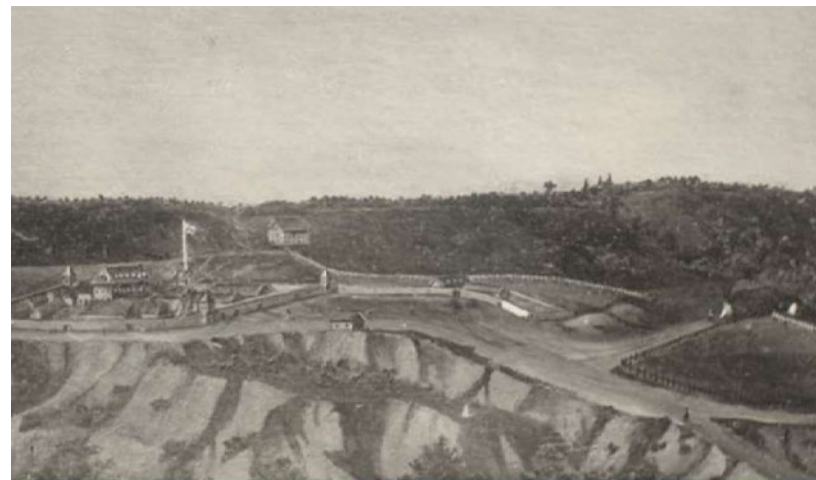


Figure 32. Construction of the new Devon bridge over the North Saskatchewan, October 1950. Credit: City of Edmonton Archives / EA-600-6016b.



Figure 33. The first train to cross the bridge over the North Saskatchewan River at Edmonton, October 20, 1902. Credit: Glenbow Archives / NA-1244-1.



Figure 34. Low Level Bridge, Edmonton, circa 1910. Credit: Glenbow Archives / PA-1175-7.



Figure 35. Edmonton to Strathcona ferry at Edmonton, circa 1910. Credit: Glenbow Archives / PA-1175-5.



Figure 36. Man washing gold at Edmonton, 1890. Credit: Library and Archives Canada / Ernest Brown fonds / e011303100-040.



Figure 37. Edmonton Power's Desmond the Dragon raft at the 1986 Sourdough Raft Race. Credit: City of Edmonton Archives / Edmonton Power fonds / EA-84-10.



Figure 38. Klondike Days Sourdough Raft Race, 1980. Credit: City of Edmonton Archives / City of Edmonton Parks and Recreation Department fonds / ET-28-1214.

The Edmonton to Strathcona ferry, circa 1906. Credit: Prairie Postcards Collection / Peel's Prairie Provinces / PC006953.



# Strathcona County

## Historic Overview

Strathcona County sits on the traditional territory of the Tsuut'ina, Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Cree, Plains Cree, and Stoney peoples, as well as on the Métis Homeland. For thousands of years, these Nations hunted bison on the plains. The former townsite of Strathcona, now part of Edmonton, was a traditional gathering place for camping, ceremony, and trading. Trading also occurred throughout the Beaver Hills region.

Europeans arrived in the late eighteenth century as they sought to expand the fur trade west. The Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company established forts at Fort Saskatchewan in 1795. In 1802, both companies relocated to the Rosedale Flats in what is now Edmonton. First Nations and Métis from across the region camped on the river flats when they came to trade at the forts. Métis and Cree settled more permanently on the flats in the 1830s. The south side of the river was home to a poorer working class, who were unable to afford any formal title to their land and were eventually pushed off the river lots when the government began surveying the area for settlement in 1882.

European settlement increased in 1891, after the Calgary and Edmonton Railway selected Strathcona as a railway terminus. The railway terminated south of the North Saskatchewan River to avoid the high cost of building a bridge across the river to Edmonton. Strathcona was first established as a hamlet, later growing into a town and then a city. In 1912, the city of Strathcona was incorporated into the City of Edmonton.

Other hamlets in the region grew around farming and coal mining. Largely populated by immigrants from eastern Europe, these communities included Clover Bar and Josephburg. There were more than a dozen coal mines in the area, including at Clover Bar, Whitemud Creek, and the present site of Strathcona Science Park. Coal mining lasted until the 1950s, when oil and petrochemical production became the dominant industries, cementing Strathcona County's place within the province's "Industrial Heartland."

## North Saskatchewan River

Human interaction with the North Saskatchewan River in Strathcona County has included the following:

- ▶ Archaeologists have determined that ancient peoples camped along the bend in the river where the former town of Strathcona lies. These peoples camped on the river flats, where they could fish at spawning sites near creeks and gather rocks and stones to fashion tools and weapons.
- ▶ The Edmonton area, including the former town of Strathcona, was a traditional gathering place for many Indigenous peoples living in the region. The river provided transportation for those who reached the gathering place by canoe.
- ▶ Indigenous groups have camped along the North Saskatchewan River for thousands of years, using the river as a source of transportation and sustenance.
- ▶ The North Saskatchewan River was the region's primary fur trade highway. Traders and Indigenous peoples travelled along the river to and from Fort Edmonton.
- ▶ First Nations and Métis camped on the river flats when they came to Fort Edmonton to trade.
- ▶ Métis lived on river lots on both sides of the North Saskatchewan River. Those living on the south side, including what would become Strathcona, were working-class Métis who, unlike those living on the north side, were unable to gain formal title to their lots. The scrip system resulted in most being pushed off their lands.
- ▶ Both scow and steamboat ferries were the primary means of crossing the North Saskatchewan River between Strathcona and Edmonton from the late 1800s until 1913 when the High Level Bridge was constructed.
- ▶ Logging operations upstream floated logs downriver to Edmonton and Strathcona, where they were processed at sawmills. One located at Strathcona's river flats was owned by former Hudson's Bay Company employee John Walter.
- ▶ John Walter also started a ferry to carry people, animals, and goods across the river between Strathcona and Edmonton.
- ▶ Dredging and panning for gold was a common practice on the river, especially between the 1860s and 1890s.
  - ▶ In the 1860s, Thomas H. Clover of Edmonton found gold at what is now known as Clover Bar.
- ▶ In June 1915, the North Saskatchewan flooded. The flood demonstrated the interconnectedness of communities along the river, as the flood warning that reached John Walter at Strathcona came from Rocky Mountain House.

## Archival Assets

The following table provides a list of archival collections that contain additional information on this region of the North Saskatchewan River.

Archive & Fonds	Date	Extent & Description
<b>Northern Alberta Pioneers and Old Timers' Association fonds</b> City of Edmonton Archives	1885-2009	Consists of records created and collected by the Northern Alberta Pioneers and Old Timers' Association. Includes textual and photographic records, including many photographs of old Strathcona.
<b>Thomas Walker fonds</b> City of Edmonton Archives	1915	Consists of photographs taken by Thomas Walker during the North Saskatchewan River flood of June 1915.
<b>Peter Fidler fonds</b> Hudson's Bay Company Archives	1790-1809	Consists of records created by Peter Fidler, a surveyor and officer of the Hudson's Bay Company. Records include Fidler's journals, surveys, and sketches created during his travels in the West, including the area around what is now Fort Saskatchewan.
<b>Hudson's Bay Company, Edmonton</b> Hudson's Bay Company Archives	1795-1938	Records pertaining to the Hudson's Bay Company's Edmonton post. Records include post journals, correspondence books, account books, and district reports.
<b>Ernest Brown fonds</b> Provincial Archives of Alberta	1759-1965; 1880-1960	Contains 11,000 photographs captured or collected by photographer Ernest Brown. Includes photographs of early settlement near Edmonton.
<b>Strathcona County Museum &amp; Archives</b>	Unknown	The Strathcona County Museum & Archives holds a variety of regional history records. While they do not have an online collection, research could be done in person or by contacting the centre.



# Digital Assets

The following images offer a sample of available graphic material relating to the history of the North Saskatchewan River in this region.



Figure 39. Low Level Bridge over the North Saskatchewan River, looking from Edmonton to Strathcona, circa 1900. Credit: Prairie Postcards Collection / Peel's Prairie Provinces / Postcard 6935.



Figure 40. Lumbering on the North Saskatchewan River, Strathcona, circa 1903. Credit: Prairie Postcards Collection / Peel's Prairie Provinces / PC006342.4.

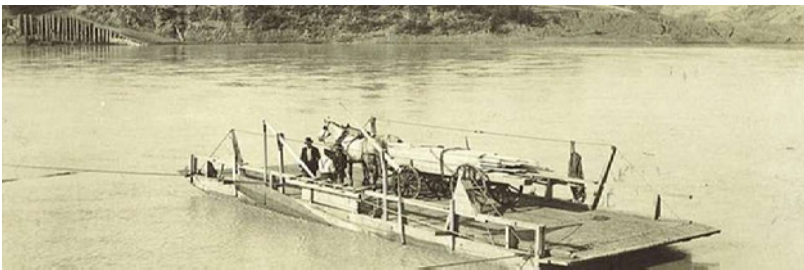


Figure 41. The Edmonton to Strathcona ferry, circa 1906. Credit: Prairie Postcards Collection / Peel's Prairie Provinces / PC006953.



Figure 42. View of Imperial Oil refinery at Strathcona, with the North Saskatchewan River in the background, circa 1975. Credit: Glenbow Archives / JP-101-12-3.



Figure 43. Clover Bar Ferry crossing at the North Saskatchewan River between Edmonton and Strathcona. Credit: Prairie Postcards Collection / Peel's Prairie Provinces / PC017853.

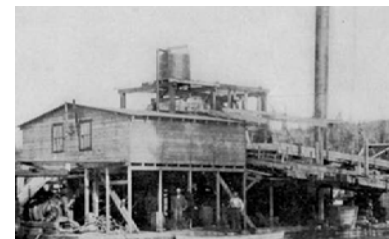


Figure 44. Gold dredging on the North Saskatchewan at Strathcona, 1898. Credit: City of Edmonton Archives / ea-10-1363.

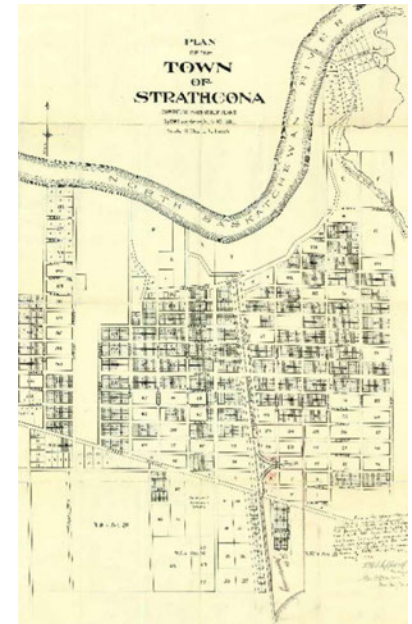


Figure 45. Plan of the Town of Strathcona, 1905. Credit: City of Edmonton Archives / EAM-241a.



# Sturgeon County

## Historic Overview

The present site of Sturgeon County has been home to the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Nehiyaw (Plains Cree), Stoney, and Cree for thousands of years. It is also part of the Métis Homeland. The confluence of the North Saskatchewan and Sturgeon rivers was a traditional boat-building encampment for the Niitsitapi and Nehiyaw due to the abundance of birch trees. Known as Birch Hills, its location provided access to both waterways, which were key transportation routes.

Europeans reached the region in the mid-eighteenth century, as explorers and surveyors were sent by fur trading companies to investigate the western expansion of the fur trade. In 1795, permanent forts were established: Fort Augustus by the North West Company and Edmonton House by the Hudson's Bay Company. The adjacent forts were located on the north side of the North Saskatchewan River, just upstream from present-day Lamoureux. This location was advantageous due to its proximity to the North Saskatchewan, which became the major fur trade highway between the West and Hudson Bay (and, from there, the European market). The rival forts remained here until 1802, when they were relocated to Edmonton.

French Canadian settlement began in the 1870s. In 1872, brothers Joseph and Frank Lamoureux of Quebec settled along the river after the location was recommended to them by the Canadian Pacific Railway survey crew. Their families joined them, and more French-Canadian homesteaders soon followed, establishing farms on river lots. Though agriculture was the predominant industry, the enterprising Lamoureux brothers brought several other businesses to the region. They operated a ferry across the North Saskatchewan River between Lamoureux and Fort Saskatchewan; a lumber mill; a grist mill; and a steamboat freighter.

Settlement continued to grow after the railway arrived in 1905 and the Canadian Northern Railway built a bridge across the North Saskatchewan River to connect Fort Saskatchewan with the north side of the river. Many of the new settlers were Ukrainian farmers, and small communities developed, such as Eldorena.

## North Saskatchewan River

Human interaction with the North Saskatchewan River in Sturgeon County has included the following:

- ▶ The Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and Nehiyaw (Cree) built canoes at the confluence of the North Saskatchewan and Sturgeon Rivers. This was a popular canoe-building encampment because of the abundance of birch trees and the connection to both waterways. This was one of several locations along the North Saskatchewan that bore the name "Birch Hills," suggesting that the name may have been used broadly to refer to boat-building spots.
- ▶ Fort Augustus and Edmonton House were established along the riverbank because they provided essential access to the river for travel, the transportation of goods, and subsistence.
- ▶ First Nations and Métis canoed along the North Saskatchewan River to reach Fort Augustus and Edmonton House. They camped along the river flats during trading visits.
- ▶ In the 1870s, French Canadian farmers began settling on river lots along the North Saskatchewan. River lots provided irrigation for crops and access to transportation.
- ▶ The Lamoureux brothers operated a freighting service between Edmonton and Battleford using their steamboat the S.S. Minnow.
- ▶ The Lamoureux brothers operated a ferry across the North Saskatchewan, bridging the gap between settlements on either side of the river until the railway bridge was built in 1905.
  - ▶ The first ferry was a scow boat used between 1874 and 1882.
  - ▶ In 1882, a cable ferry was installed. The cable broke several times, leaving people without transport.
  - ▶ In 1894, the ferry sank, as it was overburdened with bricks, lumber, and horses. A new location was selected for the replacement ferry, but shallow water forced it to move back to the original Lamoureux brothers' site.
- ▶ The Athabasca Landing Trail, a land route frequented by fur traders and gold prospectors travelling between Edmonton and northern communities, followed the North Saskatchewan River before turning north to follow the Sturgeon River. Also known as the "100 Mile Portage," the trail was built by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1876.
- ▶ The growth of Ukrainian settlement meant increased demand for transportation across the river. In 1908, the government ferry at Victoria Settlement was relocated to Eldorena, where it ran until 1967.

## Archival Assets

The following table provides a list of archival collections that contain additional information on this region of the North Saskatchewan River.

Archive & Fonds	Date	Extent & Description
<b>Lamoureux Family fonds</b> Provincial Archives of Alberta	1860-1972	Contains photographs and textual records created by the Lamoureux family, the first French Canadian settlers in the area.
<b>Gilda Rath fonds</b> City of Edmonton Archives	1870-1971	Consists of textual records created and collected by Gilda Rath, a descendant of the Lamoureux family. Includes material on the history of the Lamoureux family and settlement. Also includes material on steamboat transportation and on local First Nations and Métis.
<b>Hudson's Bay Company, Edmonton</b> Hudson's Bay Company Archives	1795-1938	Records pertaining to the Hudson's Bay Company's Edmonton post. Includes records on the original Edmonton House post located down the river from Lamoureux. Records include post journals, correspondence books, account books, and district reports.
<b>Peter Fidler fonds</b> Hudson's Bay Company Archives	1790-1809	Consists of records created by Peter Fidler, a surveyor and officer of the Hudson's Bay Company. Records include Fidler's journals, surveys, and sketches created during his travels in the West.
<b>Ernest Brown fonds</b> Provincial Archives of Alberta	1759-1965; 1880-1960	Contains 11,000 photographs captured or collected by photographer Ernest Brown. Includes photographs of early settlement near Edmonton.

## Digital Assets

The following images offer a sample of available graphic material relating to the history of the North Saskatchewan River in this region.

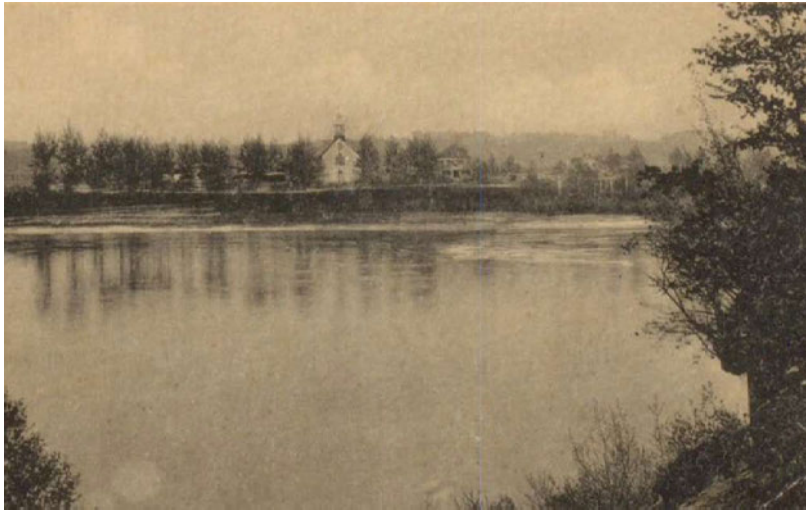


Figure 46. Saskatchewan River, Lamoureux, Alberta. Credit: Prairie Postcards Collection / Peel's Prairie Provinces / PC041126.



Figure 47. Launching the Minnow at Medicine Hat, 1884. The Lamoureux brothers purchased the steamboat in 1887. Credit: Glenbow Archives / NA-550-14.



Figure 48. Sturgeon River Mouth. Credit: City of Edmonton Archives / MS-59-1-EA-160-657.



Figure 49. Eldorena Ferry, 1918. Credit: Provincial Archives of Alberta / A2212.

Piling cordwood, Smoky Lake, Alberta, circa 1925-1933. Credit: Provincial Archives of Alberta / Nicholas W. Gavinchuk fonds / G20.



# Smoky Lake County

## Historic Overview

Smoky Lake County sits on the traditional territory of the Plains Cree, Stoney, Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), and Cree, and is part of the Métis Homeland. The area was part of these groups' hunting grounds and used for seasonal campsites.

The first Europeans in the region were fur traders travelling along the North Saskatchewan to Edmonton and the Rocky Mountains. Between 1810 and 1813, Fort White Earth operated near present-day Pakan. Fort White Earth was a pair of competing forts operated by the Hudson's Bay and North West companies, both of which had temporarily relocated to the site from Fort Edmonton and Fort Vermilion.

Victoria Settlement (now Pakan) is one of the oldest settlements on the North Saskatchewan River. For thousands of years, it was a seasonal Cree campsite. By the early 1860s, there was a growing population of Métis fur traders and buffalo hunters in the area. In 1862, Wesleyan Methodist George McDougall and his family established the Victoria Mission. In 1864, the Hudson's Bay Company built a small post near the mission so that it could better compete with free traders. Attracted by the mission and the Hudson's Bay Company post, more Métis families began to arrive from Red River, and by 1865, between 25 and 35 Métis families had established river lot farms at Victoria Settlement. Other Métis families took lots up the river in nearby Lobstick Settlement. There was also a large Cree population along the river, with encampments of up to 100 tents at a time.

Victoria Settlement gained a church, school, post office, and several businesses. As the surrounding land was opened for settlement in the early 1900s, European and Canadian settlers, many of them Ukrainian, established farms in the region. Victoria was expected to remain the region's major economic centre until 1918, when instead Smoky Lake became the area's railway point.

The wider Smoky Lake County region was primarily agricultural. Farming communities developed at Wasel, Waskatenau, Smoky Lake, Shandro, Desjarlais, and Egg Lake.

## North Saskatchewan River

Human interaction with the North Saskatchewan River in Smoky Lake County has included the following:

- ▶ The river was an unofficial boundary between Cree and Blackfoot territory to the north and south of the river, respectively.
- ▶ The area that became Victoria Settlement was a seasonal campsite and gathering place for First Nations, especially Cree. It was also a fording site for First Nations.
- ▶ The Victoria Trail, part of the Carlton Trail between Fort Garry and Fort Edmonton, was an overland route that followed the North Saskatchewan River from Victoria to Edmonton.
- ▶ Free traders operated along the North Saskatchewan River in the mid-nineteenth century.
- ▶ From 1810 to 1813, the Hudson's Bay and North West companies relocated their posts near Edmonton to what would become the Victoria Settlement. The temporary, shared location offered similar advantages to Edmonton, providing river access for trade and transportation.
- ▶ In 1864, the Hudson's Bay Company opened another post, Fort Victoria, at Egg Creek near the Victoria Mission so that it could compete with free traders. It selected this spot because it intersected the river and two overland routes, making it advantageous for travel.
- ▶ Métis established farms on long river lots at Victoria Settlement and Lobstick Settlement, which gave them access to water for transportation and agriculture.
- ▶ From the 1860s to the 1890s, miners panned for gold along the North Saskatchewan near the Victoria Settlement.
- ▶ Victoria Settlement was a stopping point along steamboat routes to Edmonton between the 1870s and 1910s. Steamboats also carried supplies to and from the settlement.
- ▶ Ferries provided essential transportation for people, livestock, mail, and supplies.
  - ▶ Ferries were privately operated until the 1890s, when the territorial government began operating their own ferries.
  - ▶ The first government-run ferry at Victoria was opened in 1892. It ran until 1972, when a bridge was built near Pakan.
  - ▶ As homesteaders arrived and the demand for transportation grew, ferries were installed at Shandro (1900), Eldorena (1908), Warspite (1920), and Waskatenau (1921). The ferries ran until 1963, when a bridge was built at Waskatenau.
- ▶ In the winter, people could walk or drive horse teams or cars over the river. When the ice was not yet frozen but the ferry still unable to run, the nearest bridge was at Fort Saskatchewan.

- ▶ The Shandro ferry crossing (1900-1964) was a popular place for fishing, harvesting timber, and doing laundry. People living in Shandro on the south side of the river would cross the North Saskatchewan on the ferry to pick blueberries and saskatoons on the north banks.
- ▶ The river was used for recreational activities like fishing, swimming, and skating.

## Archival Assets

The following table provides a list of archival collections that contain additional information on this region of the North Saskatchewan River.

Archive & Fonds	Date	Extent & Description
<b>Hudson's Bay Company, Victoria (Alta.)</b> Hudson's Bay Company Archives	1864-1883, 1887-1898	Contains annual reports from the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Victoria post.
<b>Hudson's Bay Company, Edmonton</b> Hudson's Bay Company Archives	1795-1938	Records pertaining to the Hudson's Bay Company's Edmonton posts, including the one at Fort White Earth. Records include post journals, correspondence books, account books, and district reports.
<b>Nicholas W. Gavinchuk fonds</b> Provincial Archives of Alberta	1917-1994	Consists of approximately 10,000 records created by Nicholas W. Gavinchuk, a Ukrainian immigrant who settled around Smoky Lake in 1919. A photographer, Gavinchuk captured images of Smoky Lake communities, people, businesses, and events.

# Digital Assets

The following images offer a sample of available graphic material relating to the history of the North Saskatchewan River in this region.



Figure 50. Victoria, 1898. Credit: George M. Dawson / Library and Archives Canada / PA-038161.



Figure 51. View of ferry on river, Pakan, Alberta, 1929. Credit: Glenbow Archives / ND-3-4684e.



Figure 52. Fort Victoria. Credit: Ernest Brown / Provincial Archives of Alberta / B.2406.



Figure 53. Piling cordwood, Smoky Lake, Alberta, circa 1925-1933. Credit: Provincial Archives of Alberta / Nicholas W. Gavinchuk fonds / G20.



Figure 54. Fishing in Saskatchewan River near Pakan, circa 1935. Credit: Nicholas W. Gavinchuk / Provincial Archives of Alberta / G368.



Figure 55. Drilling plant, Victoria Settlement, 1898. Credit: George M. Dawson / Library and Archives Canada / PA-038160.



Figure 56. Shandro ferry across the North Saskatchewan River, 1925. Credit: Canada. Dept. of Mines and Technical Surveys / Library and Archives Canada / PA-019901.

Bridge over the North Saskatchewan River at Elk Point, circa 1930. Credit: Prairie Postcards Collection / Peel's Prairie Provinces / PC003552.



# Two Hills / St. Paul / Vermilion River Counties

## Historic Overview

The Two Hills / St. Paul / Vermilion River counties are the traditional territory of the Nehiyaw (Plains Cree), Stoney, Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), and Cree peoples. These groups followed the buffalo hunt throughout the region and camped seasonally on the banks of the river.

The fur trade arrived in the region in the late eighteenth century. Before there were forts in the vicinity, traders and Indigenous peoples travelled along this stretch of the North Saskatchewan while investigating the western trade and while returning east to Hudson Bay.

In 1792, both the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and the North West Company (NWC) established forts on the north side of the North Saskatchewan River near the present site of Elk Point. The NWC fort was called Fort George, and the HBC post Moose Hills (later Buckingham House). The forts were abandoned in 1800, when the HBC moved operations to Island House and the NWC to Fort de l'Isle. Both were located on Fort Island in the North Saskatchewan River.

Around 1802, Fort Vermilion (sometimes known as Paint Creek House) was established by the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company on the north bank of the North Saskatchewan, near Marwayne. Like Fort George and Buckingham House, Fort Vermilion was a pair of forts operated by the two companies. This offered shared protection against any violence in the region. The fort was abandoned in 1810 but revived in 1814, when visiting trader Gabriel Franchère found there were about 90 people living at the abandoned fort. Fort Vermilion operated until approximately 1821.

In 1865, Catholic missionary Father Albert Lacombe established St. Paul des Cris Mission on the north side of the North Saskatchewan River at what is now Brosseau. Father Lacombe aimed to convert the local Cree population to Catholicism and push them to adapt to an agricultural lifestyle. The mission was largely unsuccessful in this and, after a devastating smallpox outbreak that decimated the population, closed in 1874.

Homesteading began after 1905. European and Canadian homesteaders established farms in the region, and agriculture became the region's primary industry. In 1948, the Alberta Salt Company began harvesting salt from a natural salt deposit in the North Saskatchewan River, near Lindbergh. The salt plant operated under various owners until 2022, providing employment for generations of workers.

Two Hills / St. Paul / Vermilion River Counties



## North Saskatchewan River

Human interaction with the North Saskatchewan River in the Two Hills / St. Paul / Vermilion River area has included the following:

- ▶ The riverbanks near the Saskatchewan border may have been used by Indigenous peoples as riverside buffalo jumps. Buffalo pounds were also located near the river.
- ▶ For thousands of years, First Nations harvested river clay to make pottery and decorative items. The names Paint Earth Creek and Vermilion River were derived based on this use.
- ▶ The north side of the river at Brosseau was a traditional Cree gathering place.
  - ▶ This influenced Father Lacombe's selection of the site for St. Paul des Cris Mission in 1865.
- ▶ In 1767, HBC employee William Pink had a seasonal canoe-building site at Mooswa, near present-day Lindbergh.
- ▶ Fort George and Buckingham House were built on the north banks of the river, where the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies—and the Indigenous peoples with whom they traded—had easy access to transportation.
- ▶ At least two independent fur traders were also operating posts near Fort George and Buckingham House.
- ▶ In 1796, the first York boat built for the Saskatchewan River system was crafted at Buckingham House.
- ▶ Ferries were located along the North Saskatchewan River, allowing people to cross the river during the warmer months.
  - ▶ Among the ferries in this region were ones located at St. Paul (1901), Lea Park (1908), Hopking's Crossing, near St. Paul (1908), Hood's Crossing, near Elk Point (1909), Lindbergh (1911), Myrnam (1914), Heinsburg (1914), and Forbesville (1917).
- ▶ Cattle were often transported to their summer pastures by ferry.
- ▶ At Elk Point, residents could cross the river in a cable car called a "go-devil." This was an enclosed cage suspended by a cable running across the river. There was also a jigger, which was a ferry attached to the cable.
- ▶ Ice cut from the river was used to make ice cream served at C. A. Johnson's ice cream parlour in Elk Point, which opened in 1914.
- ▶ A natural salt deposit near Lindbergh was mined from 1948 to 2022. The salt plant, originally owned by the Alberta Salt Company, used water from the North Saskatchewan River in its salt wells.

## Archival Assets

The following table provides a list of archival collections that contain additional information on this region of the North Saskatchewan River.

Archive & Fonds	Date	Extent & Description
<b>Hudson's Bay Company, Buckingham House</b> Hudson's Bay Company Archives	1792-1800	Consists of post journals from the Hudson's Bay Company's Buckingham House post, which operated from 1792-1800.
<b>Hudson's Bay Company, Fort Vermilion (Saskatchewan River)</b> Hudson's Bay Company Archives	1808-c.1821	Consists of post journals from the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Vermilion post, which operated from 1808 until at least 1821.
<b>Hudson's Bay Company, Island House</b> Hudson's Bay Company Archives	1800-1804	Consists of the Island House post journal for the year 1800-1801.

## Digital Assets

The following images offer a sample of available graphic material relating to the history of the North Saskatchewan River in this region.



Figure 57. Bridge over the North Saskatchewan River at Elk Point, circa 1930. Credit: Prairie Postcards Collection / Peel's Prairie Provinces / PC003552.

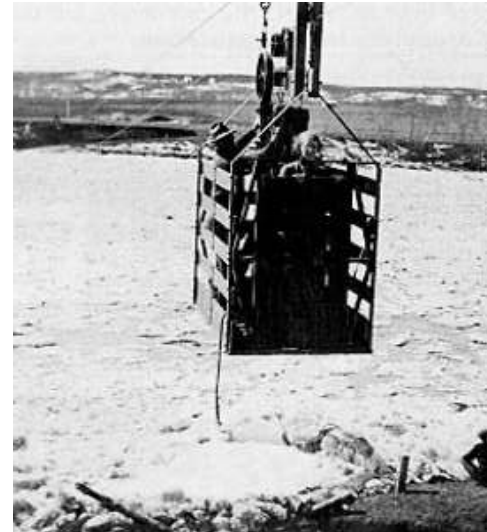


Figure 58. "Go-devil" ferry at Elk Point, circa 1936. Credit: Elk Point Historical Society.



Figure 59. Ferry at Heinsburg, Alberta, circa 1930s. Credit: Glenbow Archives / NA-4055-1.

Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. August 16, 1898. Credit: Geological Survey of Canada / Library and Archives Canada / PA-051443.



# Fort Saskatchewan

## Historic Overview

The present site of Fort Saskatchewan has been occupied by the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and Nehiyaw (Cree) peoples since time immemorial. First known as Birch Hills, the site was a boat-building encampment for both the Niitsitapi and Nehiyaw due to the abundance of birch trees and its proximity to the North Saskatchewan River, a major transportation route.

Europeans first explored the region in the mid-eighteenth century, looking to establish a western fur trade. It was not until 1795, however, that permanent trading posts were constructed near what is now Fort Saskatchewan. The first was Fort Augustus, built by the North West Company on the north bank of the North Saskatchewan River. Just months later, in the fall of 1795, the Hudson's Bay Company established its own fort, Edmonton House, adjacent to Fort Augustus. Both forts were abandoned and relocated within six years, as fur-bearing mammal populations were depleted, along with resources like firewood.

French Canadian settlement began in the 1870s, when the Lamoureux family began farming on river lots across from Fort Saskatchewan. The Lamoureux family also started a lumber mill and freighting business. More farmers arrived, and the settlement grew as a church, school, and various businesses were established.

Much of this growth was spurred on by the arrival of the North West Mounted Police (NWMP). In 1875, seeking to establish law and order in the West, the NWMP built Sturgeon Creek Post, later renamed Fort Saskatchewan. Fort Saskatchewan was the NWMP's second fort, thus it played a significant role in the early establishment of the institution. Located on the south side of the river, the fort was surrounded by a tall palisade and consisted of a men's building, officers' quarters, guardroom, and horse stables. In 1885, the fort was expanded due to fear of conflict during the North West Resistance. It was expanded again in 1889 to become the NWMP's G Division headquarters.

The railroad through Fort Saskatchewan was completed by the Canadian Northern Railway in 1905. The line included a bridge across the North Saskatchewan River, offering residents and visitors an alternative to the ferry crossing, previously the only means of crossing the river. The railroad brought continued growth, as settlers from Canada and Europe sought new opportunities in the Canadian West.

In the 1910s, the NWMP relocated its G Division headquarters to Edmonton and sold its land at Fort Saskatchewan to the provincial government. The government used the land to construct a provincial jail and courthouse. Fort Saskatchewan grew around the jail and industries such as agriculture, nickel refinement, and chemical manufacturing.

**Fort Saskatchewan**

## North Saskatchewan River

Human interaction with the North Saskatchewan River in Fort Saskatchewan has included the following:

- ▶ The Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and Nehiyaw (Cree) built canoes at the confluence of the North Saskatchewan and Sturgeon Rivers. This was a popular canoe-building encampment because of the abundance of birch trees and the connection to both waterways. This was one of several locations along the North Saskatchewan that bore the name "Birch Hills," suggesting that the name may have been used broadly to refer to boat-building spots.
- ▶ Fort Augustus and Edmonton House were established along the riverbanks because they provided essential access to the river for travel, the transportation of goods, and subsistence.
- ▶ The NWMP selected Fort Saskatchewan for the site of its barracks due to the gentle slope of the riverbank (as opposed to the steep banks on the Edmonton side). They also anticipated that Fort Saskatchewan would be the crossing point of the transcontinental railway due to shallow water levels, as well as the suitability of the surrounding land for agriculture (versus the swampy land around Edmonton).
- ▶ French Canadian farmers settled in river lots on both sides of the North Saskatchewan, at Fort Saskatchewan and a few kilometers away at what is now Lamoureux.
- ▶ The river provided irrigation for farmers.
- ▶ The NWMP used the North Saskatchewan River to move soldiers and supplies, especially during the North West Resistance.
- ▶ The river was used for freighting, beginning with the Lamoureux brothers in the 1870s. Timber for building construction in Fort Saskatchewan was transported down the North Saskatchewan by raft.
- ▶ The Lamoureux brothers operated a ferry across the North Saskatchewan, bridging the gap between settlements on either side of the river until the railway bridge was built in 1905.
- ▶ In 1910, the town of Fort Saskatchewan built a hydroelectric dam on the Sturgeon River to provide electricity to homes and businesses. However, the dam lasted less than two years before being destroyed by the force of water.
- ▶ The river supplies the water necessary for the refining and manufacturing industries in Fort Saskatchewan.
- ▶ Recreationally, the river has been the site of annual boat races since 1966.
- ▶ From the 1880s to the 1920s, the hills along the river were used for sleighing in the winter.

## Archival Assets

The following table provides a list of archival collections that contain additional information on this region of the North Saskatchewan River.

Archive & Fonds	Date	Extent & Description
<b>Hudson's Bay Company, Edmonton</b> Hudson's Bay Company Archives	1795-1938	Records pertaining to the Hudson's Bay Company's Edmonton post. Includes records on the original Edmonton House post located across the river from what is now Fort Saskatchewan. Records include post journals, correspondence books, account books, and district reports.
<b>Peter Fidler fonds</b> Hudson's Bay Company Archives	1790-1809	Consists of records created by Peter Fidler, a surveyor and officer of the Hudson's Bay Company. Records include Fidler's journals, surveys, and sketches created during his travels in the West, including what is now Fort Saskatchewan.
<b>CN Images of Canada Collection</b> Ingenium Archives (Canada Science and Technology Museum)	1850s-1999	Consists of images capturing the history and evolution of the Canadian National Railway and its predecessors.
<b>Royal Canadian Mounted Police fonds</b> Library and Archives Canada	1868-1999	Records created and maintained by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and its predecessors, including the North West Mounted Police. Includes textual records, photographs, architectural drawings, and maps. Contains a series dedicated to the NWMP and RCMP's G division, which was originally headquartered at Fort Saskatchewan. Annual reports and a large photograph collection also included.
<b>Canadian National Railway fonds</b> Library and Archives Canada	1825-1990s	Contains textual, photographic, and cartographic material created and maintained by Canadian National Railway and its predecessors.
<b>Sydney Prior Hall fonds</b> Library and Archives Canada	1878-1890	Consists of 313 sketches, paintings, and lithographs created by artist Sydney Prior Hall. This includes artwork produced during Hall's trip to the North West (including the North Saskatchewan River) alongside the Governor General in 1881.
<b>Canadian National Railway Company fonds</b> Provincial Archives of Alberta	1897-1999	Consists of textual, photographic, and cartographic records created by the Canadian National Railway and its predecessors.

# Digital Assets

The following images offer a sample of available graphic material relating to the history of the North Saskatchewan River in this region.

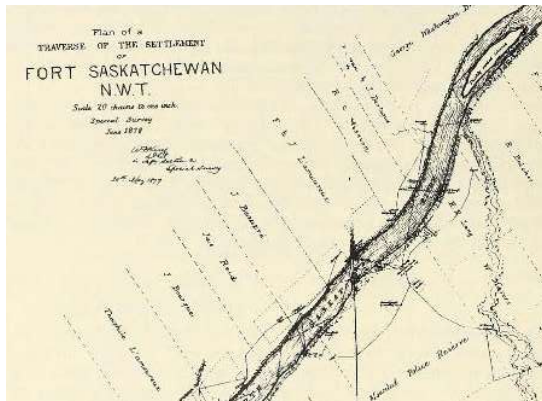


Figure 60. Survey of the Fort Saskatchewan settlement in 1878. The Lamoureux family's river lot can be seen on the far northwest side of the map. Credit: Department of Highways, Edmonton. Digital copy printed in Heinz Pyszczuk, *Archaeology Guide and Tour of Greater Edmonton Area* (Edmonton: Provincial Museum of Alberta, 1996), 55.

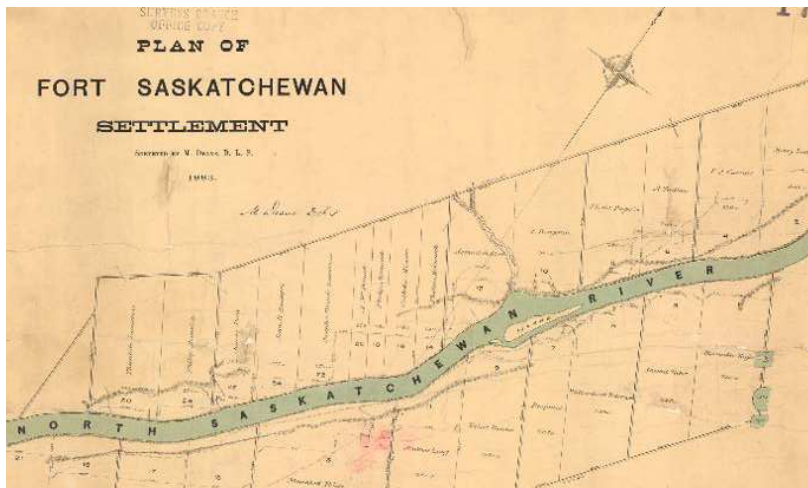


Figure 61. Plan of Fort Saskatchewan Settlement surveyed by M. Deane D.L.S. 1883. Credit: Library and Archives Canada / e011368895.

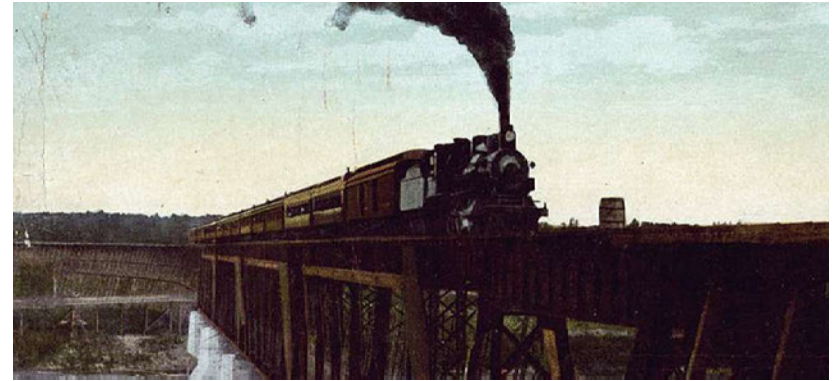


Figure 62. Bridge at Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta, circa 1912. Credit: Prairie Postcards Collection / Peel's Prairie Provinces / PC0003652.



Figure 63. Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta, circa 1900-1905. Credit: Galt Museum / Accession no. 19731724000-068.



Figure 64. C.N.R. Bridge, Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta, circa 1906. Credit: Peel's Prairie Provinces, Prairie Postcards / PC003653



Figure 65. Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta, August 16, 1898. Credit: Geological Survey of Canada / Library and Archives Canada / PA-051443.



Figure 66. Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta, October 26, 1879. Credit: George M. Dawson / Library and Archives Canada / C-034237

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## **Appendix G: Chronology of Recent Events – 2022**

*[still under development]*



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# ***Planning and Development Law***

**Current Trends, Issues and Updates**

University of Alberta – Applied Land Use Planning

May 17, 2023



**BROWNLEE LLP**  
*Barristers & Solicitors*

## Moderated by:



**Lorne I. Randa**  
Partner, Brownlee LLP



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1. Downzoning
2. LPRT v SDAB
3. Community Revitalization Levy
4. Subdivision Bonds
5. Utility Infrastructure Ownership and Maintenance
6. Land Use Bylaws and Statutory Plans
7. Questions



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# ***Downzoning***

Municipal Authority to Regulate  
Lands and the Obligation to  
Compensate



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## Presented by:



**Marlena (Marny) S. Paul**  
Senior Associate, Brownlee LLP  
Calgary



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**PART I – Planning Decisions and Land Value**

**Part II – Constructive Takings: Impact of *Annapolis***



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# Planning Decisions and Land Value





## Planning Decisions and Land Value

- Planning decisions can have significant impact on land value and ability to develop private lands.
- Can effectively deny use of lands for purpose they were acquired.
- Decisions reflected in two principal types of documents:
  - Statutory Plans
  - Land Use Bylaw





# Planning Decisions and Land Value

## DOWNZONING

- In Canada, municipalities have broad latitude to downzone lands provided they act in good faith and pursuant to legitimate planning objectives.
- Overriding presumption that downzoning is permissible and non-compensable.
- Codified in s. 621, *MGA*:

### **Compensation**

**621** “Except as provided in this Part [17] and in section 28 of the *Historical Resources Act*, nothing in this Part or the regulations or bylaws under this Part gives a person a right to compensation.”



# Planning Decisions and Land Value

## EXCEPTIONS

**Common Law:** Alberta Court of Appeal has held that a distinction may be drawn:

- ✓ Development Freezes put in place to secure the proper staging of development
- ✗ Development freezes put in place to preserve land for future public acquisition

**Statutory:** the *MGA* provides that, **in limited, specific cases**, a designation restricting use of private lands may trigger an obligation that the municipality purchase or re-designate the land (s. 644, *MGA*).



## Planning Decisions and Land Value

**S. 644(1)** *If land is designated **under a land use bylaw** for use or intended use as:*

- *a municipal public building,*
- *school facility,*
- *park or recreation facility*

*and the municipality does not own the land, the **municipality must** within 6 months from the date the land is designated **do one of the following**:*

- acquire the land or require the land to be provided as reserve land;*
- commence proceedings to acquire the land or to require the land to be provided as reserve land...; or*
- amend the land use bylaw to designate the land for another use or intended use.*



## JUDICIAL CONSIDERATION

- Limited judicial consideration of Sections 621 and 644.
- Prior to 2022:
  - *Hartel Holdings Co. Ltd. v. City of Calgary*, [1984] 1 SCR 337
    - Section 70 of the *Planning Act* applied; nearly identical language as Section 644
    - No compensation awarded for development freeze by City
    - SCC confirmed that there is nothing “inherently wrong” with a development freeze as long as it furthers legitimate planning purposes



# Planning Decisions and Land Value

## JUDICIAL CONSIDERATION

- Most recent decision to consider both Section 621 and 644:
  - *Three Sisters Mountain Village Properties Ltd v Canmore (Town)*, 2022 ABQB 511:
    - Town redesignated portion of Three Sisters' land as "Natural Park District"
    - District allows for open space, trail, sign, wildlife habitat patch, and wildlife corridor
    - Court held these uses limited the area to being a park as that word is used under Section 644
    - Town ordered to either re-designate or acquire lands as required by Section 644





# Planning Decisions and Land Value

## SCOPE OF SECTION 644

- The Court in *Three Sisters* confirmed the following:
  1. Section 644 applies only where the designation of use as a park (for example) is **pursuant to a bylaw**.
  2. The applicable **limitation period** for a landowner to bring an application to compel the municipality to take steps is the general **two-year period** under section 3(1) of the *Limitations Act*, plus the **six-month period** within which the municipality must act under Section 644.





# Planning Decisions and Land Value

## SCOPE OF SECTION 644

- Lingered Question:

Is Section 644 only triggered when there is an **exclusive designation** of one of the specified uses (municipal building, school facility, park or recreation facility), such that no other reasonable private uses are possible?

- Court did not provide a clear position on this specific question.







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# Constructive Takings

*Impact of Annapolis Group Inc. v. Halifax Regional Municipality, 2022 SCC 36*



# Constructive Takings

## WHAT IS A CONSTRUCTIVE TAKING?

- Also known as a “*de facto* expropriation”
- Expropriation is defined under the *Alberta Expropriation Act* as:
  - the taking of land;
  - without the consent of the owner;
  - by [a government] authority in the exercise of its statutory powers.



# Constructive Takings

## WHAT IS A CONSTRUCTIVE TAKING?

No formal  
transfer of a  
property interest

Government  
regulation so  
restrictive that  
owner is deprived  
of property rights  
to the benefit of  
the government  
authority



## Constructive Takings

- Constructive taking actions generally not successful in the land regulation context:
  - *Alberta (Minister of Infrastructure) v. Nilsson*, 2002 ABCA 283
    - Land sterilized by the Provincial designation as “Restricted Development Area”
    - Imposition of a development freeze and denial of a development permit did not amount to a *de facto* expropriation
    - Valid land use controls are an unavoidable aspect of modern land ownership, through which the best interests of the individual owner are subjugated to the greater public interest.



## Constructive Takings

- *Canadian Pacific Railway Co. v. Vancouver (City)*, 2006 SCC 5
  - CPR owned a corridor of land near Granville Island that was no longer used for railway operations.
  - City adopted a bylaw which designated the corridor as a public thoroughfare for the purposes of transit, rail, cyclist paths and pedestrian trails.
  - Effect of the bylaw was to freeze the redevelopment potential of the corridor.
  - While the bylaw effectively froze use of the land, the SCC confirmed the City had the power to plan for land development, which allowed the City to set a vision and course for future development.
  - No compensation for *de fact* expropriation awarded.



# Constructive Takings

## TWO-PART TEST ESTABLISHED

- For a *de facto* taking requiring compensation at common law, two requirements must be met:
  1. A government authority must acquire a beneficial interest in the owner's property or flowing from it (the "**Acquisition Branch**"); and
  2. An owner must lose all reasonable uses of their property (the "**Loss Branch**").
- Decision in *CPR* highly criticized by academics because the City's re-designation meant the only reasonable development was for public use.



## Constructive Takings

- *Annapolis Group Inc. v. Halifax Regional Municipality, 2022 SCC 36*
  - For approximately 50 years Annapolis took steps to acquire parcels of undeveloped lands outside Halifax.
  - The City refused to amend its development bylaw to allow for development to proceed.
  - In 2006, the City implemented a Planning Strategy which designated a portion of the Lands for the future use as a regional park.
  - Annapolis sued for constructive taking
- Court in *Annapolis* did not determine if compensation was payable, but did side with the developer that the action should not be summarily dismissed.



# Constructive Takings

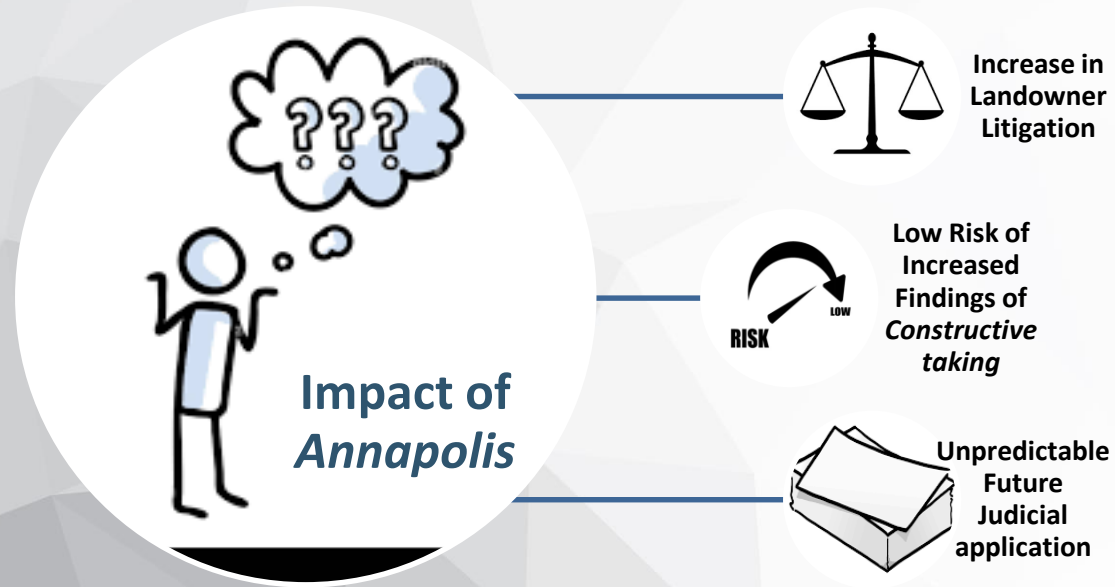
## MAIN TAKEAWAYS FROM ANNAPOLIS DECISION

- Expansion of the **Acquisition Branch** of the *CPR* Test.
  - In determining whether there is “beneficial interest” to municipality under the Acquisition Branch – the test should be **interpreted broadly**.
  - A “beneficial interest” must include not only actual acquisition of property rights, but also where **an advantage** has “flowed to the state”
- Intention of the public authority may be relevant.





# Impact of Annapolis Decision





# Final Summary

1. Presumption is that development freezes are permissible and non-compensable
  - Decision must be made in good faith and to secure the proper staging of development
  - Codified in s. 621, *MGA*
2. Remedies for zoning decisions made in bad faith or for improper purpose:
  - **Statutory Remedy:** If new zoning only allows for municipal public building, school facility, park or recreation facility (and no other reasonable private uses), Municipality must either take steps to acquire land or amend the land use bylaw to allow for another use (s. 644, *MGA*)
  - **Common Law:** Bylaw amendment/planning decision may be deemed void  
Constructive taking claim?



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# ***LPRT v. SDAB***

Solving the Puzzle of Appellate  
Tribunal Jurisdiction



**BROWNLEE LLP**  
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## Presented by:



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Q. When does a development appeal go before the Land and Property Rights Tribunal (LPRT) versus the local Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB)?

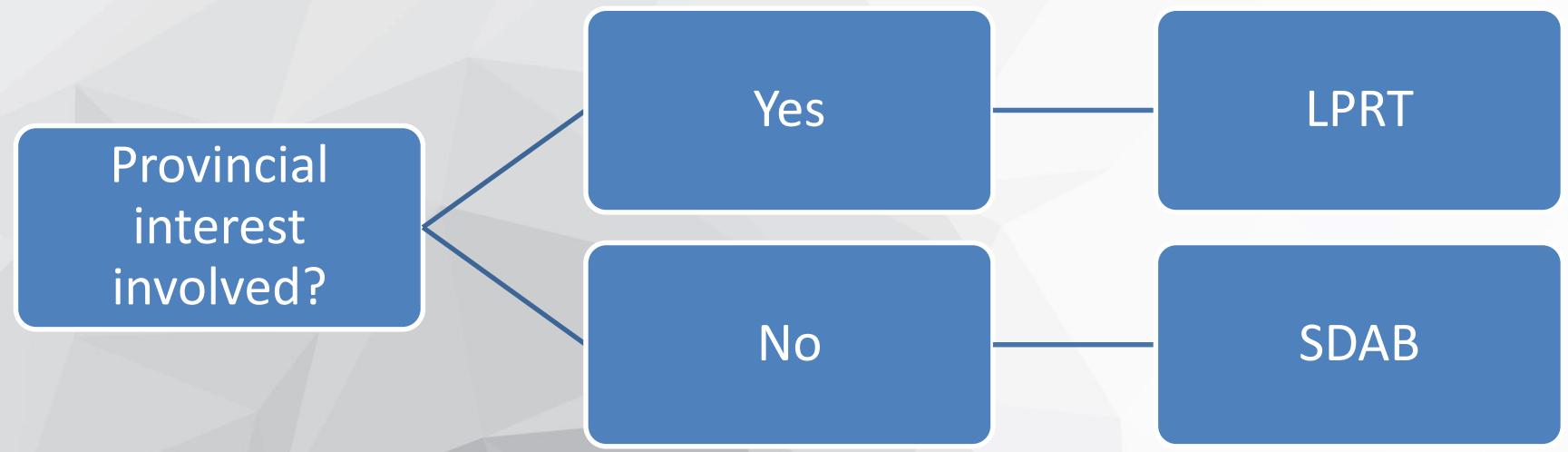




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**A. It's complicated.**

Generally the basic idea is:



However, the way this is implemented in the legislation is much more complex than this.



# Section 685

## Grounds for appeal

### 685(1) If a development authority

- (a) fails or refuses to issue a development permit to a person,
- (b) issues a development permit subject to conditions, or
- (c) issues an order under [section 645](#),

the person applying for the permit or affected by the order under [section 645](#) may appeal the decision in accordance with subsection (2.1).





## Section 685

A Development Authority MUST indicate in its development decision (whether that's a development permit refusal, granting of development permit with conditions, or issuance of stop order) where the appeal must be filed.

(MGA s. 685(1.1))

A staff report to a Development Authority should contain a statement on appeal jurisdiction.

(This is also true for a subdivision decision – s. 656(2))





## Section 685(2.1)

(2.1) An appeal referred to in subsection (1) or (2) may be made

(a) to the Land and Property Rights Tribunal

(i) unless otherwise provided in the regulations under [section 694\(1\)\(h.2\)\(i\)](#), where the land that is the subject of the application

(A) is within the Green Area as classified by the [Minister](#) responsible for the [Public Lands Act](#),

(B) contains, is adjacent to or is within the prescribed distance of a highway, a body of water, a sewage treatment or waste management facility or a historical site,

(C) is the subject of a licence, permit, approval or other authorization granted by the Natural Resources Conservation Board, Energy Resources Conservation Board, Alberta Energy Regulator, Alberta Energy and Utilities Board or Alberta Utilities Commission, or

(D) is the subject of a licence, permit, approval or other authorization granted by the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas or the Minister of Forestry, Parks and Tourism,

or

(ii) in any other circumstances described in the regulations under [section 694\(1\)\(h.2\)\(ii\)](#),

or

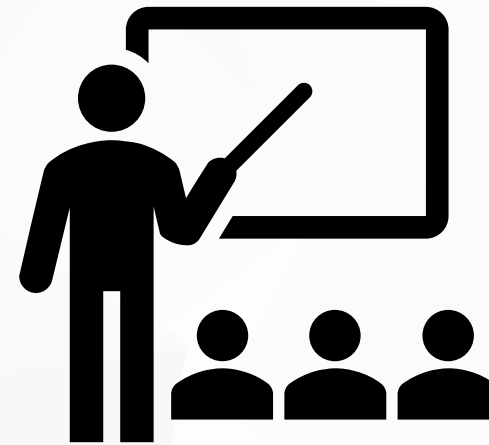
(b) in all other cases, to the subdivision and development appeal board.



## Section 685(2.1)

- (i) unless otherwise provided in the regulations under section 694(1)(h.2)(i),
- (ii) in any other circumstances described in the regulations under section 694(1)(h.2)(ii),

These are IMPORTANT caveats...





Regulations have been passed that both add to and take away from the criteria in s. 685(2.1)





## Matters Related to Subdivision and Development Regulation, Alta Reg 85/2022

### Appeals removed from list

**27(1)** The following are removed from the list of circumstances where a notice of appeal of a decision of a development authority may be filed with the Land and Property Rights Tribunal:

(a) an appeal where the land that is the subject of the application is within the Green Area as classified by the Minister responsible for the Public Lands Act, as referred to in section 685(2.1)(a)(i)(A) of the Act;

(b) an appeal where the land that is the subject of the application contains, is adjacent to or is within the prescribed distance of a highway, a body of water, a sewage treatment or waste management facility or a historical site, as referred to in section 685(2.1)(a)(i)(B) of the Act.

**(2)** Subject to subsections (3) and (4), the appeals referred to in subsection (1) may be commenced by filing a notice of appeal with the subdivision and development appeal board.

**(3)** If the land that is the subject of an appeal referred to in subsection (1) is subject to a licence, permit, approval or other authorization referred to in section 685(2.1)(a)(i)(C) or (D) of the Act, then, despite subsection (1), the appeal may be commenced by filing a notice of appeal with the Land and Property Rights Tribunal.

**(4)** Subsection (1) does not apply to an appeal if the notice of appeal was filed with the Land and Property Rights Tribunal before May 12, 2021.



So the effect is:

**MGA S.685(2.1)** An appeal referred to in subsection (1) or (2) may be made

(a) to the Land and Property Rights Tribunal

(i) unless otherwise provided in the regulations under section 694(1)(h.2)(i), where the land that is the subject of the application

~~(A) is within the Green Area as classified by the Minister responsible for the Public Lands Act,~~

~~(B) contains, is adjacent to or is within the prescribed distance of a highway, a body of water, a sewage treatment or waste management facility or a historical site,~~

(C) is the subject of a licence, permit, approval or other authorization granted by the Natural Resources Conservation Board, Energy Resources Conservation Board, Alberta Energy Regulator, Alberta Energy and Utilities Board or Alberta Utilities Commission, or

(D) is the subject of a licence, permit, approval or other authorization granted by the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas or the Minister of Forestry, Parks and Tourism,



## Matters Related to Subdivision and Development Regulation, Alta Reg 85/2022

### **Additional circumstances where appeal may be filed**

**29(1)** In this section, “Minister” means the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas.

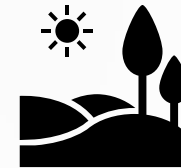
**(2)** In addition to the circumstances listed in [sections 678\(2\)\(a\)\(i\) and 685\(2.1\)\(a\)\(i\)](#) of the [Act](#), a notice of appeal may be filed with the Land and Property Rights Tribunal **where the land that is the subject of the application is the subject of a licence, permit, approval or other authorization granted by the Minister or granted under any Act the Minister is responsible for under [section 16](#) of the *Government Organization Act*.**

**(3)** Subsection (2) does not apply where the land that is the subject of the application is designated land as defined in the [Canmore Undermining Review Regulation \(AR 34/2020\)](#).



## So the following (and others) can also trigger LPRT jurisdiction

- *Surface Rights Act* approvals
- *Surveys Act* approvals
- *Water Act* approvals







# Summary of Legislation

This all means that, for now (subject to changes in the Regulation or the *MGA* itself) development appeals go to the LPRT when the relevant land:

- is the subject of a licence, permit, approval or other authorization granted by the Natural Resources Conservation Board, Energy Resources Conservation Board, Alberta Energy Regulator, Alberta Energy and Utilities Board or Alberta Utilities Commission, or
- is the subject of a licence, permit, approval or other authorization granted by the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas or the Minister of Forestry, Parks and Tourism, or
- is the subject of a licence, permit, approval or other authorization granted under any Act the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas is responsible for under section 16 of the Government Organization Act (Surface Rights Act, Water Act, etc.)



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Q. When is the land the “subject of the”  
licence/permit/approval/authorization?

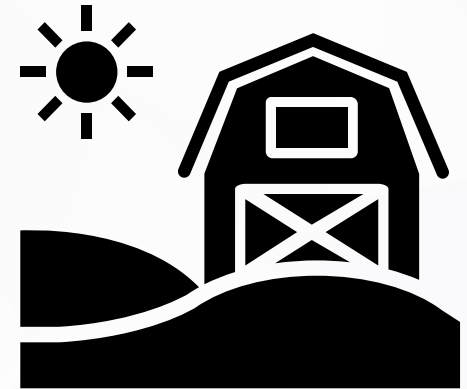
A. Focus on prior approvals, etc., not on  
a pending application.

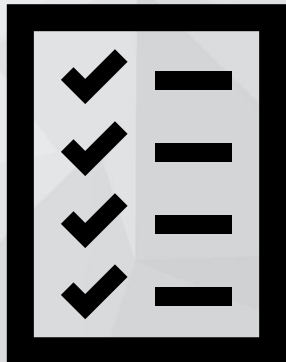


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*Horvath v. Lethbridge County (Subdivision Authority),  
2022 ABLPRT 266*

- Subdivision case – but test for jurisdiction (s. 678(2)) is nearly identical
- Was about subdividing a residence and farmyard near Lethbridge





- Applicant for subdivision applied to LPRT to subdivide land
- Subdivision authority directed appeal to LPRT because the land contained two pipelines that were the subject of pipeline licences from the Alberta Energy Regulator
- But, pipelines not relevant to the reasons for the proposed subdivision at all



LPRT decided that it did have jurisdiction.

At paragraph 8 it said:

“Although the pipelines appear unrelated to the land use planning issues raised in this appeal, the wording of the legislation as amended in December 2020 directs appeals to the LPRT when the subject land is the subject of a licence granted by the AER. Such is the case here, **and while the policy intent behind this direction is not readily apparent, the wording is unambiguous.** Accordingly, the LPRT has jurisdiction to hear this matter.” [*emphasis added*]





Jonk v. Westlock County (Development Authority),  
Unreported SDAB Decision

- Stop order appeal case
- Another jurisdictional issue involving a pipeline licence





Jonk v. Westlock County (Development Authority),  
Unreported SDAB Decision



- Pipeline on the land:
  - Didn't have anything to do with the stop order appeal (which was about a shop building)
  - Was abandoned and not in use (though licence still showed as "issued" on the AER's website)
  - Was nowhere near the shop building at issue, even though it was on the same parcel
  - Does LPRT still have jurisdiction?



## Jonk v. Westlock County (Development Authority), Unreported SDAB Decision

- Yes - that was still enough to trigger the LPRT's jurisdiction
- SDAB said:

“In the present case, the AER licence relates to an abandoned pipeline. While the SDAB appreciates the Appellants’ argument with respect to a lack of provincial interest, the SDAB is bound by the wording of the MGA. It does not contain any exception for an abandoned pipeline. According to the AER website, the pipeline licence is “issued”.

In addition, based on the wording of Section 685(2.1)(a) of the MGA, the location of the pipeline on the Site is not relevant. **Section 685(2.1)(a) of the MGA refers to “land” that is the subject of the licence. It does not specify a distance or radius.** The pipeline and the shop are both located on the Site. Therefore, the SDAB finds that Section 685(2.1)(a) of the MGA is engaged.”







## Jonk v. Westlock County (Development Authority), Unreported SDAB Decision



- Another issue that was before the SDAB – there was an approval for traditional agricultural use under section 24 of the *Water Act*, from an aquifer and a stream
- SDAB ultimately declined to consider this additional issue
- Does a development permit appeal relating to any farm that uses well or stream water will always go to the LPRT? Arguably yes because of Regulation

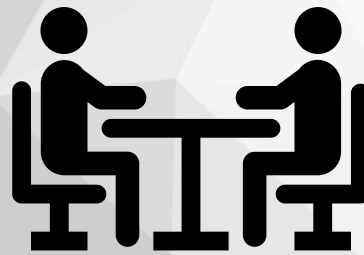


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## Jonk v. Westlock County (Development Authority), Unreported SDAB Decision

Current status of case?

- Matter has now been directed to the LPRT
- LPRT will make their own decision on jurisdiction – stay tuned





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• IN SUM:

- Jurisdiction for development appeals very much dependent on legislative wording
- Legislation aims to direct matters to LPRT where there is a Provincial interest but the test creates a wide scope for Provincial interest
- When refusing a development permit / approving with conditions / issuing a stop order, the Development Authority must have a solid justification for which appeal body the decision directing parties to – if directing to LPRT based on an approval, be ready to show them the approval
- A staff report to a Development Authority (such as a Municipal Planning Commission) should include a statement and analysis of appeal jurisdiction.





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# *Community Revitalization Levy*

Its Back! What It Is and  
Where It Can Apply



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## Presented by:



**Jeneane S. Grundberg, KC**  
**Brownlee LLP, Edmonton**



**BROWNLEE LLP**  
*Barristers & Solicitors*

# Community Revitalization Levy

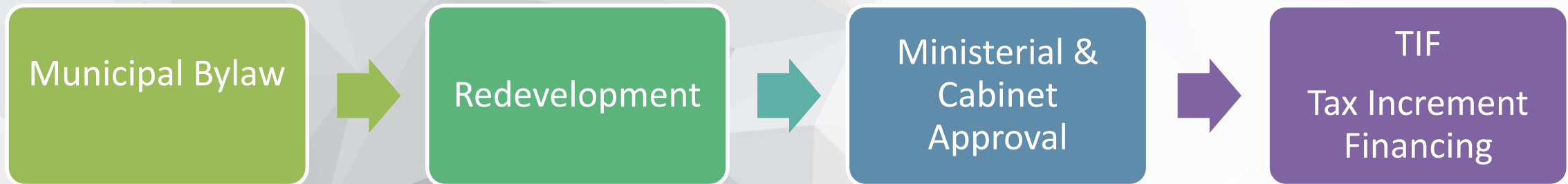
Community Revitalization Levy  
ss. 381.1 to 381.5 of the *MGA*





# Community Revitalization Levy

ss. 381.1 to 381.5 of the *MGA*





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# Community Revitalization Levy

## TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)

A municipal borrowing tool to subsidize redevelopment or other infrastructure.







# Community Revitalization Levy

Moratorium lifted July  
2022

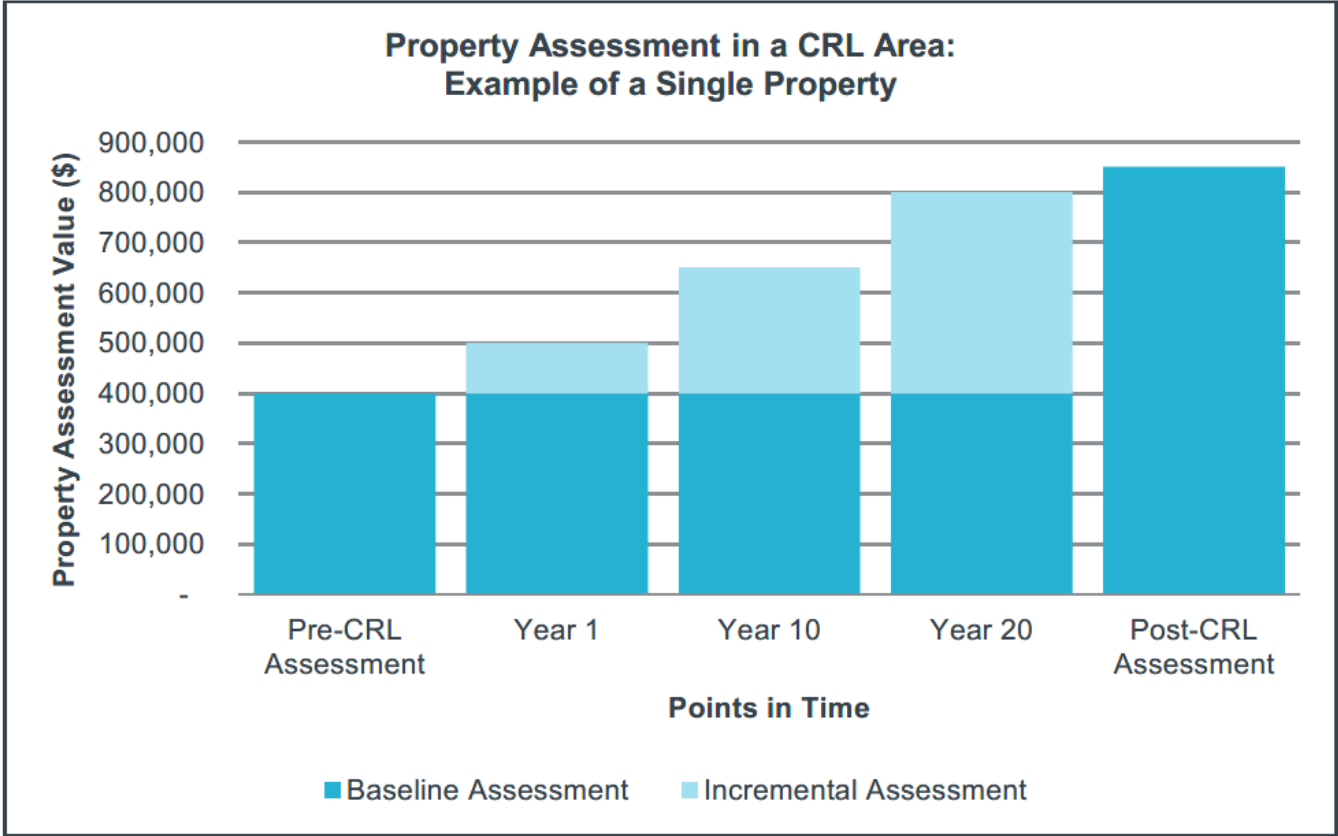
Historically:  
Edmonton  
Calgary  
Cochrane

Recently:  
Airdrie

BLIGHT



# Community Revitalization Levy





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# Community Revitalization Levy

## Map of Community Revitalization Levy Plan Area



**Town of Cochrane**  
**(23 hectares; 57 acres)**

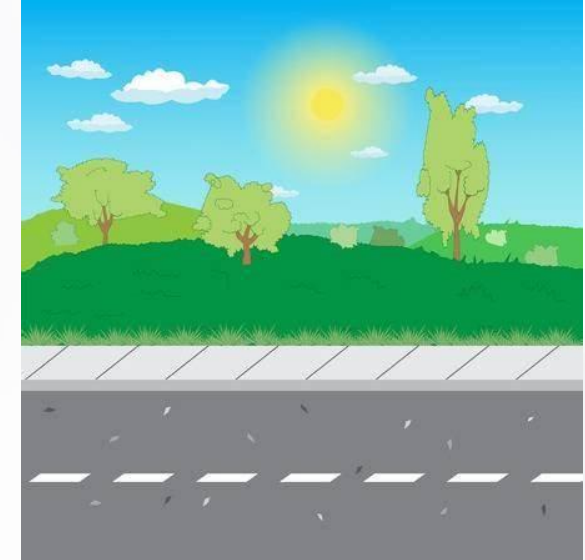
*Cochrane Community Revitalization Levy Regulation AR 204/2012, as amended*



## Community Revitalization Levy

### Cochrane CRL Funds Diverted to:

- Centre Avenue Railway Crossing;
- Sidewalks on Rail Street;
- Centre Avenue landscaping; and
- A parking structure.





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# Community Revitalization Levy

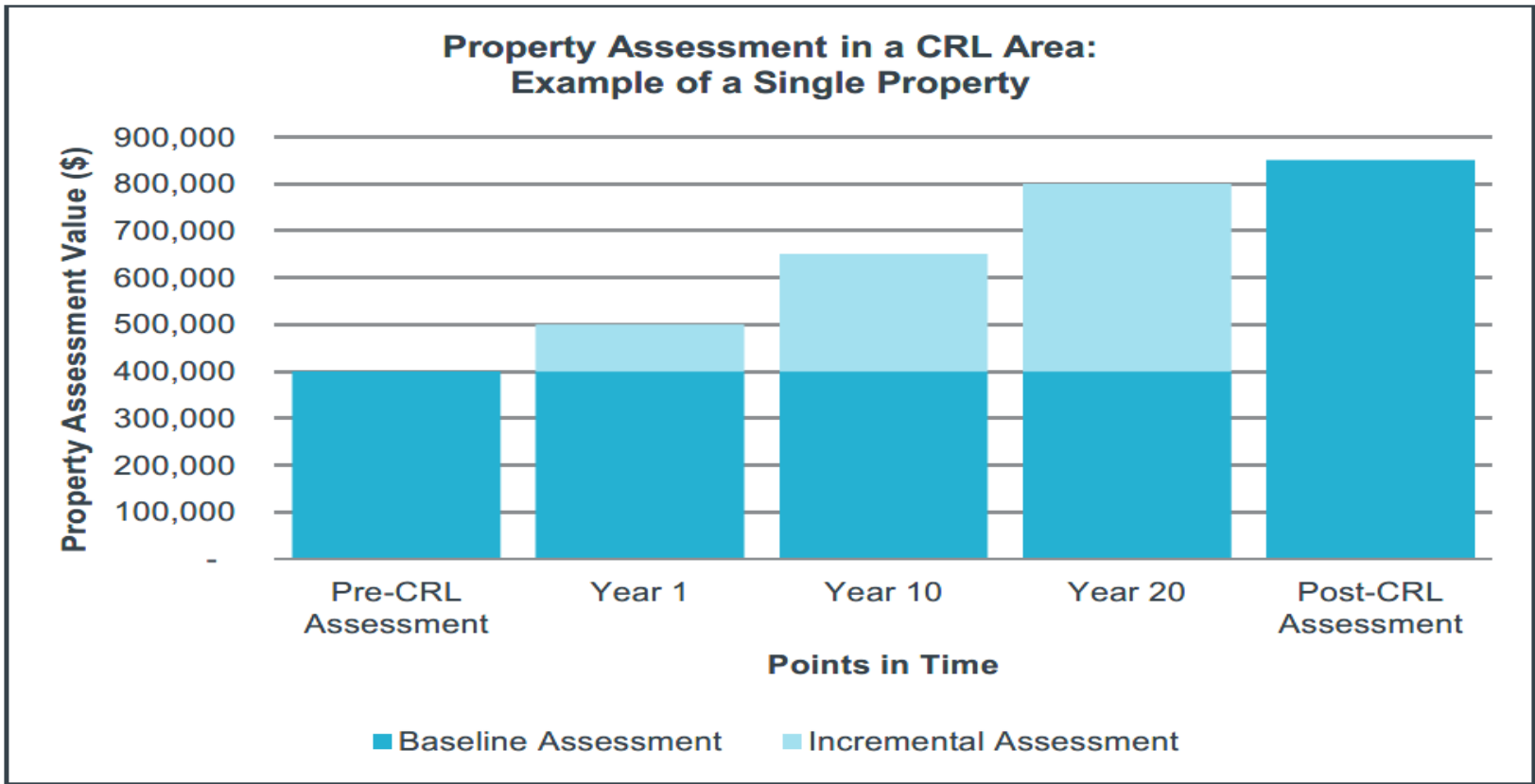
What Commercial Development did this attract to Cochrane?



- Walmart
- Marks
- Mattress Mattress
- Safeway
- Winners
- The Canadian Brewhouse
- Home Hardware
- Garmin



# Community Revitalization Levy



s. 2.4 of the Government of Alberta Community Revitalization Levy Program, Program Guidelines



# Community Revitalization Levy

## Cons

- Revenue from Incremental Assessment not available for General Revenue
- Not available for School Taxes
- Controversy
- Misunderstanding: NOT a Tax Break

## Pros

- Incremental Assessment may not otherwise be generated
- Long Term Benefits:
  - Planning
  - Tax
  - Economic Development

## Additional Pros

- Redevelopment Benefits:
  - Create new jobs
  - Increase tax income
  - Improve water, soil and air
  - Reduce urban sprawl
  - Effective use of existing infrastructure
  - Revitalize communities



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# *Security Bonds*

Bonds and Other Forms of Security  
under Development Agreements





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*Barristers & Solicitors*

## Presented by:



**Lorne I. Randa**  
**Brownlee LLP, Edmonton**



**BROWNLEE LLP**  
*Barristers & Solicitors*

- (1) Development Agreement Authority
- (2) Types of Security
- (3) Bonds as Security



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# Development Agreement Authority



# Authority under MGA

A development agreement may require an applicant to:

- (1) construct or pay for roads and pedestrian systems
- (2) install or pay for the installation of public utilities
- (3) construct or pay for off-street parking or other parking facilities, and loading and unloading facilities
- (4) pay an off-site levy or redevelopment levy
- (5) give security to ensure performance of the terms of the development agreement**



# Authority under MGA

## Section 655 – subdivision authority

- Condition of subdivision approval

## Section 650 – development authority, provided it is set out in municipality's land use bylaw

- Condition of development permit



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# Types of Security



# Types of Security

- Several types of security
- Effectiveness, however, varies based on type and amount required
- Full or more security is best for municipality, anything less represents a risk
  - 100-125 percent based on estimated construction cost of municipal improvements
  - Deferred payments such as off-site levies





# Types of Security

- Irrevocable letter of credit
  - Most preferred form of security
  - Issued by chartered bank, credit union or ATB
  - Payable upon demand
  - Automatically renewable
  - Redeemable if not renewed







# Types of Security

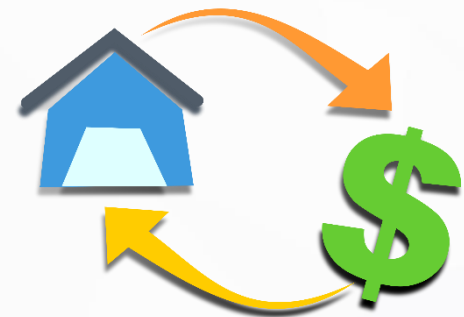
- Cash or Security Deposit
  - Funds must be held by municipality on acceptable terms
  - Create secured interest with pledge, assignment and holding of funds
  - Cash and hold in bank account
  - Personal Property Registry





# Types of Security

- Mortgage or Financial Charge
  - Generally weakest form of security
  - Requires registration against title
  - Litigation and foreclosure to enforce
  - Risky due to land price fluctuation or bankruptcy
  - Potential for competition for priority





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# Bonds as Security

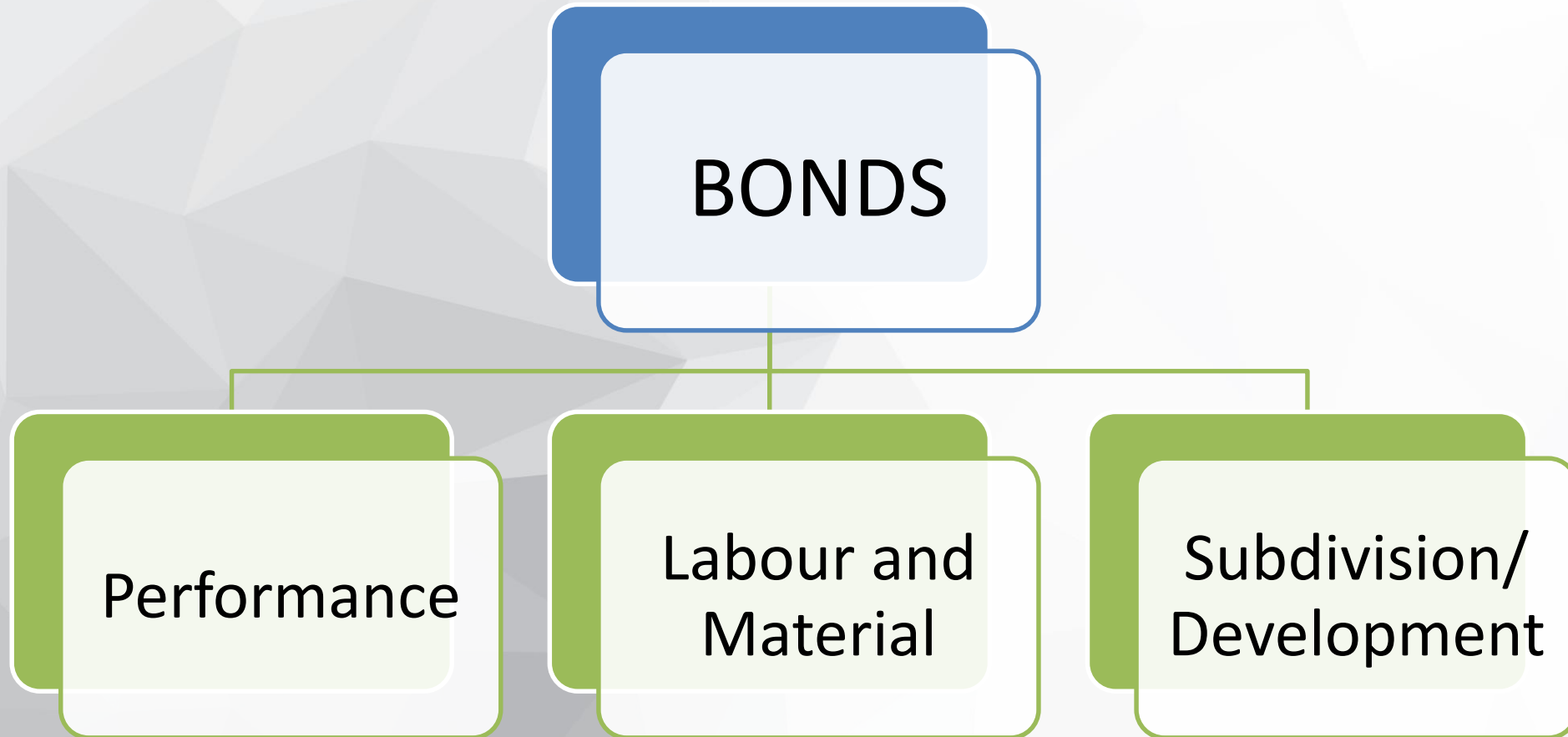


# Bonds

- Different types of bond products offered by surety companies
- Not any time of bond works for a development agreement
- Beneficiary must be the municipality
- Terms and conditions must be acceptable
  - Contractual issues/concerns



# Bond Types





# Bond Types

- Performance Bonds
  - Generally do not cover initial construction costs
  - Intended to provide funds for hiring new contractor and higher construction costs or mobilization costs
  - More applicable to procurement situation
- Labour and Material Bonds
  - Covers payment to subcontractors for goods and services
  - Again, more applicable to procurement situation



# Subdivision Bond

- Becoming more commonly requested by developers
  - Costs less for developers than LOC
  - May not require full collateral security
  - May be back by personal guarantees instead of equity or assets
- Generally covers full cost of constructing municipal improvements
- May cover other obligations of development agreement if worded properly



## Subdivision Bond

- Bonding company will require more information from developer to assess risk and determine collateral/payment
  - May ask for similar information as municipality does for determining security (e.g. cost estimates from engineers)
- Provides better protection to municipality than other forms of bonds





# Subdivision Bond

- Subdivision Bond is a contract between surety, developer and municipality
- Terms and conditions must be satisfactory to municipality
  - Development Agreement should set out minimum expectations of bond terms and conditions
  - Issued by a credible surety company
  - Payable upon demand
  - No ability to take over project
  - Covers any and all obligations under development agreement



# Challenges with Bonds

- May not automatically pay
- Must adhere to surety's requirements
- May provide right to takeover for developer
- May only pay if clear, unequivocal default of developer
- Require all actions under DA to be subject to prior notice to surety



# Challenges with Bonds

**Generally bonds considered weak security**

**Subdivision bonds are no exception**

**NOT AN INSURANCE POLICY!**



# Challenges with Bonds

**Surety company will evaluate the claim of the  
beneficiary of the bond**

***(similar in this regard to an insurer) and may be  
sympathetic to the developer's position!***

**Litigation to enforce bond may be necessary (and is likely  
to be the trend)**



# Effectiveness of Security



Letter of  
Credit



Cash  
Security



Subdivision  
Bond



Mortgage  
Charge





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# ***Utility Infrastructure Ownership & Maintenance***

Where to Draw the Line:  
Clarifying Municipal Responsibility  
Over Utility Infrastructure



**BROWNLEE LLP**  
*Barristers & Solicitors*

## Presented by:



**Marlena (Marny) S. Paul**  
**Brownlee LLP, Calgary**



**BROWNLEE LLP**  
*Barristers & Solicitors*

1

Public Utility Services in Alberta: The Statutory Scheme

2

Summary of the Decision in *Condo Corporation No. 0410106 v. Medicine Hat (City)*, 2019 ABCA 294

3

Key Takeaways and Best Practices





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# Statutory Scheme

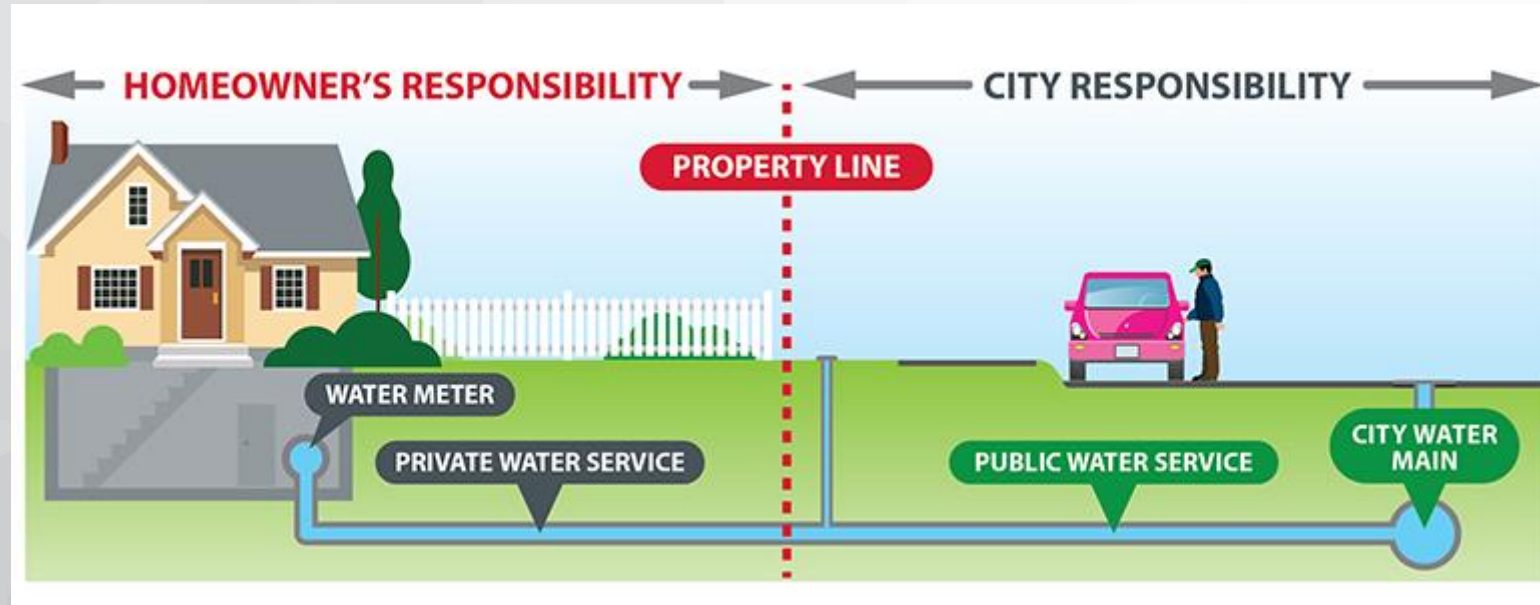


## Statutory Scheme

- *MGA* sections 28 and 34 to 39 divide Utility Service responsibility between the Public Utility and Parcel Owner:
  - **Section 28** – Defines Service Connection
  - **Section 37** – Landowner responsible for portion of “Service Connection” within private land
  - **Section 34** – Municipal duty to supply
  - **Section 35** – Municipality responsible for construction, maintenance and repair of main lines and the part of a service connection that lies under a road or easement



# Statutory Scheme





## Statutory Scheme

### **SECTION 45 FRANCHISE AGREEMENT**

- Allows a Municipality to grant a right to another person to provide a “utility service” in all or part of the Municipality.
- Franchise Agreements must be advertised and approved by the Alberta Utilities Commission.
- Provides clear regulatory oversight over third party operators.



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# Case Law

*Condo Corporation No. 0410106 v. Medicine Hat (City), 2019 ABCA 294*



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## *Condo Corp. No. 0410106 v Medicine Hat*

### **BACKGROUND:**

- River Ridge Development on the South Saskatchewan River.
- Series of Development Agreements entered into between City and Developer to divide responsibility for infrastructure and utilities for all 5 parcels.
- Developer and subsequent owners responsible for the operation, maintenance, repair and replacement of the water, sewer and storm sewer lines and systems (the “**on site work**”).
- No franchise agreement in place.



## *Condo Corp. No. 0410106 v Medicine Hat*

### **BACKGROUND:**

- On site work not built to City standards and City did not inspect.
- Sewage lift station installed on lands owned by River Ridge Condo Corp. to provide service for all 5 adjoining parcels.
- Privately owned sanitary sewer lines transmitted sewage from one parcel to another parcel, to the lift station, and from the lift station to the City's sewer main line.
- Early 2005, disputes arose regarding the ongoing operation and maintenance of the “on site work” including the lift station.
- Owners of bareland condo parcel applied to the Court for an order requiring the City to operate and maintain on site work.



## *Condo Corp. No. 0410106 v Medicine Hat*

### **COURT OF APPEAL DECISION:**

- Held that the City had a statutory duty to take over operation and maintenance of the “on site work”, being those parts of the water, sewer, and storm water systems on one corporation’s parcel that provided utility service to more than one parcel.
- Condominium parcels adjacent to City’s system and within City’s exclusive franchise area.
- Court analysis mainly focused on principles of statutory interpretation.





## *Condo Corp. No. 0410106 v Medicine Hat*

### **COURT OF APPEAL DECISION:**

- It is not consistent with the language or the purpose of the *MGA* to require the owner of one parcel to be responsible for the utility service provided to another parcel, nor, conversely, to expect the owner of one parcel to rely on the owner of another for its utility service.
- Those parts of a public utility system that are designed to serve more than 1 parcel, and then ultimately connect to a municipal system, must not depend upon unregulated, private agreements.



## Main Takeaways

1. The Decision helps clarify the line between municipal and private responsibility:
  - **Main Line** - utility infrastructure that runs **between parcels of land**, and is specifically designed to serve an entire development as a whole, and not only the individual parcel on which it sits.
  - **Service Connection** - parts of the utility system that branch off from the main lines to supply service within **one individual parcel**. Decision could be applied to any part of utility infrastructure that provides service to more than one parcel
2. If a Condo Corp. or other private third party will operate system to serve multiple parcels:
  - **Franchise agreement required**



## Main Takeaways

### SERVICING WITHIN CONDOMINIUM PLAN AREA?

- In the *MGA*, “parcel of land” refers to a “lot or block shown on a plan of subdivision” and not to a unit of a condominium (s.1(1)(v)).
  - Parts of the utility systems that serve more than one unit within a condominium (whether a traditional or bare land condominium) are not the responsibility of the City unless they also serve other parcels within the development.



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# Key Takeaways and Best Practices



## Key Takeaways/Best Practices



Adopt policies and practices to address the impacts of the Court's decision



Require legal review of any proposal for private servicing arrangements involving multiple parcels



Take ownership or plan franchise agreements under *MGA*, s.45



Infrastructure servicing more than one parcel must be constructed to municipal standards



## Key Takeaways/Best Practices

### **PROPOSED, LARGER-SCALE BARELAND CONDO PLANS**

- Recommendations:
  1. Whole Service, one parcel
  2. Plan for municipal takeover
  3. Require Franchise Agreements



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## Key Takeaways/Best Practices

### EXISTING SHARED SERVICING ARRANGEMENTS



Be Proactive



Facilitate Franchises



Inspect, Audit and Budget



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## Key Takeaways/Best Practices

### EXISTING SHARED SERVICING ARRANGEMENTS



Shore-up URWs



Disclosure Requests





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# ***Land Use Bylaws & Statutory Plans***

Keeping up with the Times:  
Reviewing and Revising Plans for  
Today and Tomorrow



**BROWNLEE LLP**  
*Barristers & Solicitors*

## Presented by:



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**Kelley Fiske-Nielsen**  
Brownlee LLP, Calgary



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*Barristers & Solicitors*

- (1) Review & Revise
- (2) Land Use Bylaw
- (3) Statutory Plans
- (4) Other Planning Documents
- (5) The Plan



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# 1. Review and Revise

- a. Review regularly
- b. Keep a log
- c. Revise regularly





## a. Review Regularly

### Consider new developments in planning

- What are other communities doing?
- Recent cases which may impact planning
- New community issues or industries





## a. Review Regularly

### Consider new developments in legislation

- Amendments to the *MGA* or relevant regulations
- Conflicts or inconsistencies between

*MGA*, s 8, 10, 13



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## b. Keep a Log

- Track issues and problems regularly
- Follow MPC, SDAB, LPRT concerns





## c. Revise Regularly

- Bring amendments regularly and as needed
  - Have good council reports
- Reread sections with fresh eyes
- Eliminate unnecessary duplication





## 2. Land Use Bylaw

Every municipality must pass a LUB, which must:

- Divide the municipality into districts
- Prescribe to each district the uses of land or buildings permitted or that may be permitted at the discretion of the development authority in that district
- Establish a method for making decisions on applications for DPs, and issuing DPs



## 2. Land Use Bylaw

When reviewing or creating your LUB, consider the following:

- a. Definitions
- b. Development Permit Application Requirements
- c. Uses
- d. Appeals



## 2. Land Use Bylaw

### Definitions

- Consistency
- Necessity - dovetail with legislation



## 2. Land Use Bylaw

### Development Permit Application Requirements

- Does the LUB provide sufficient requirements to ensure:
  - A complete and fulsome application
  - Sufficient information to make a decision
  - The correct type of information is presented



## 2. Land Use Bylaw

### Uses

- Define uses – building versus use
- What conditions apply
- Specific development regulations/standards
- Should new uses should be adopted
- Permitted versus Discretionary



## 2. Land Use Bylaw

### Appeals

- Update to account for appeals to SDAB or LPRT
- Is an appeal a stay?



## 3. Statutory Plans

- IDP – mandatory with adjacent municipalities
  - dispute resolution
  - consistency
- MDP - mandatory
- ASP - discretionary
- ARP - discretionary



## 3. Statutory Plans

### Mandatory language versus aspirational language

- Adopting a statutory plan does not require municipality to undertake any projects referred to in it
- Language should be aspirational and non-binding







## 3. Statutory Plans

### Consistency between Statutory Plans and LUB

- Ensure consistency between plan and with MDP
- Ensure consistency with regional plans or land use policies
- Consider dovetailing definitions from your land use bylaw into your statutory plans, for overall consistency
- Consequential amendments



## 4. Other Planning Documents

Other planning documents may include:

- Engineering standards
- Grading Master Plan
- Agricultural Master Plan
- Landscaping guidelines

Keep an *updated* list of any policies that may be considered in making planning decisions



## 4. Other Planning Documents

In reviewing these documents, considering the following:

- Currency
- Accuracy
- Research-based
- Consistency



## 4. Other Planning Documents

### Other bylaws

- Ensure planning documents are consistent with other municipal bylaws
  - Grading Bylaw, Community Standard Bylaw





## 5. The Plan

### Passing, Amending, or Repealing Planning Documents

- Same process as original bylaw
- Public hearing before second reading
- Advertising
- Additional notice requirements



## 5. The Plan

- Develop a realistic and flexible plan/schedule
- Be prepared to be responsive
- Inform Council of reasons for review
- Engage the public early and in a meaningful way
- Engage legal early (before making bylaw public)



## 5. The Plan

- Leave time for change
- Provide Council with a useful and fulsome engagement report
- Provide Council with a useful and fulsome council report – why are changes being proposed; what are their options



**BROWNLEE LLP**  
*Barristers & Solicitors*



**UNIVERSITY  
OF ALBERTA**

# QUESTIONS?

[www.brownleelaw.com](http://www.brownleelaw.com)

**Municipal Toll Free: 1-800-661-9069**





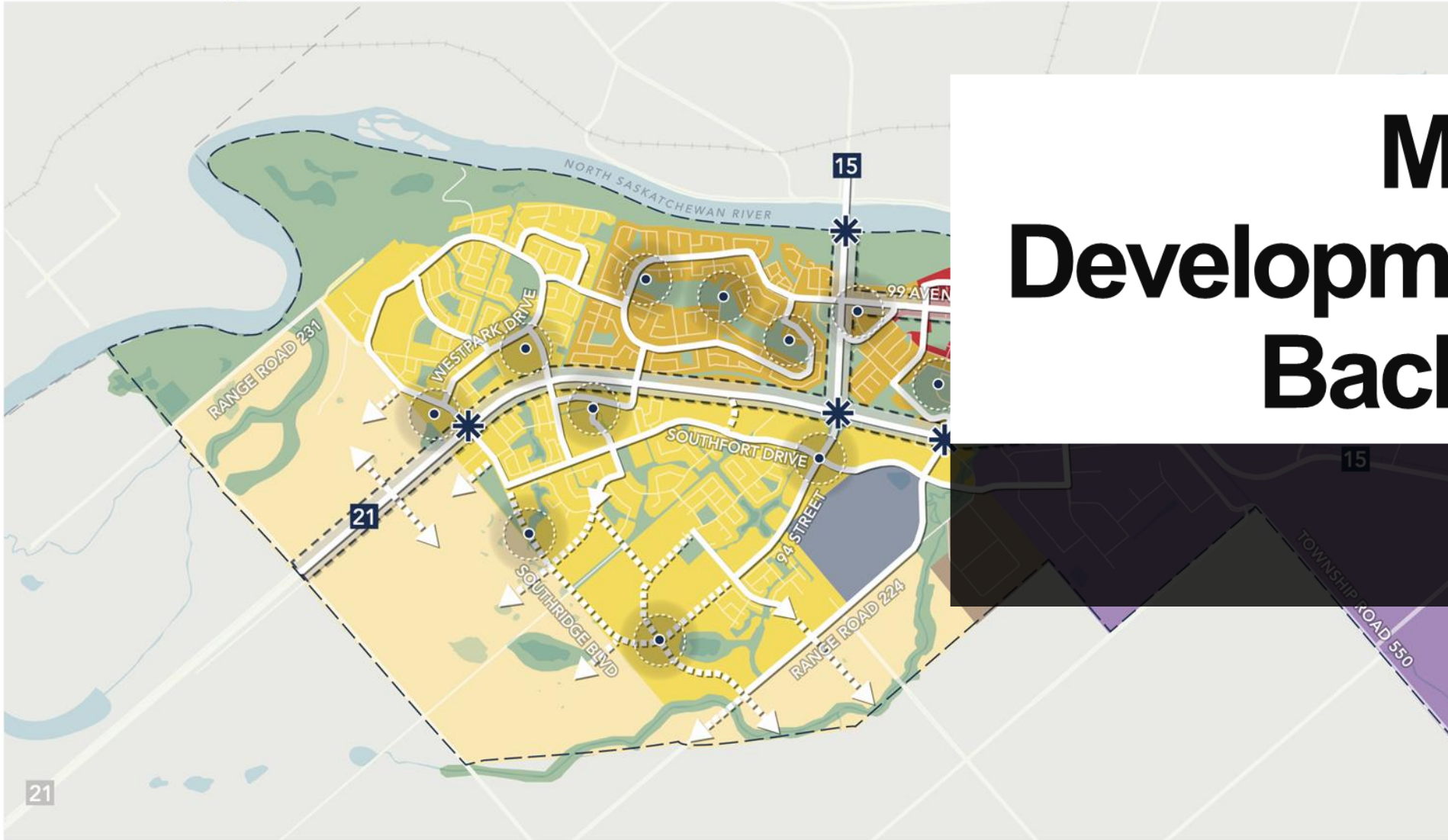
CITY OF  
FORT SASKATCHEWAN

# Restoring a Sense of Place

Place Types: A Character Based Land Use Approach



# Municipal Development Plan Background





YOU are  
invited....



*Dinner  
Party*



# The Menu....

Protein

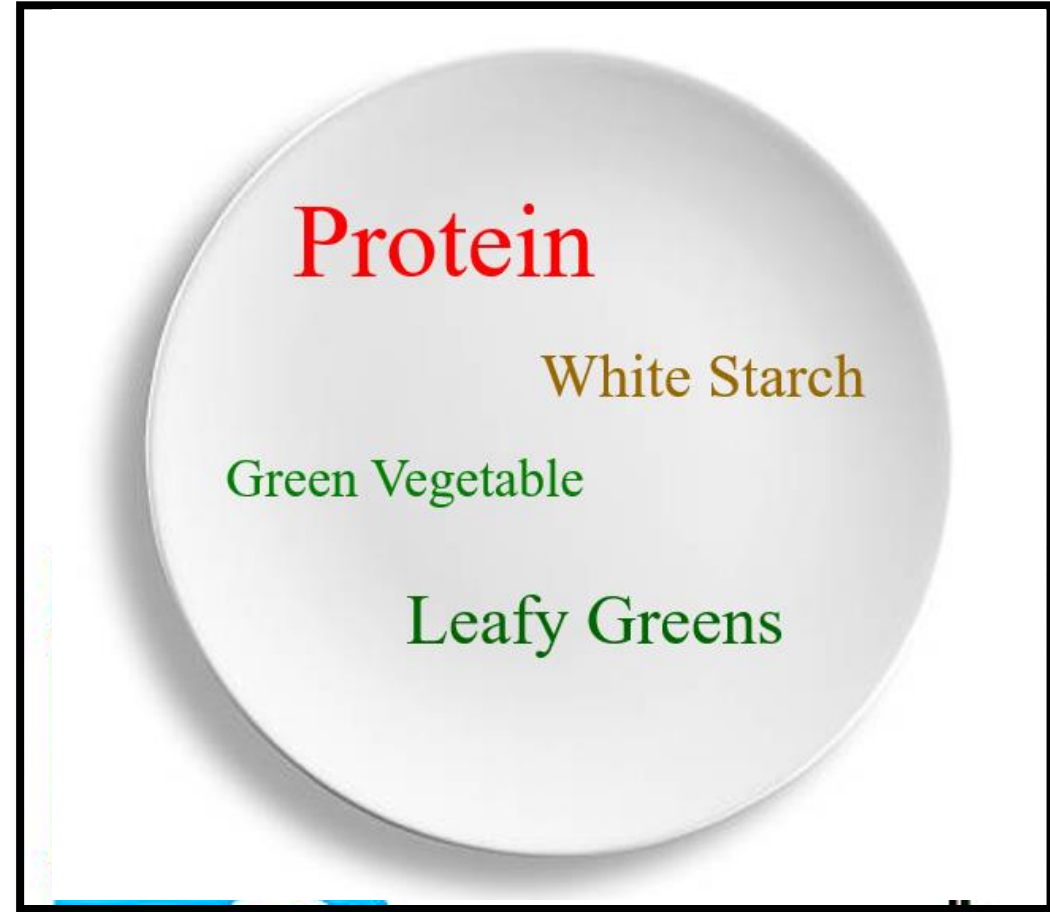
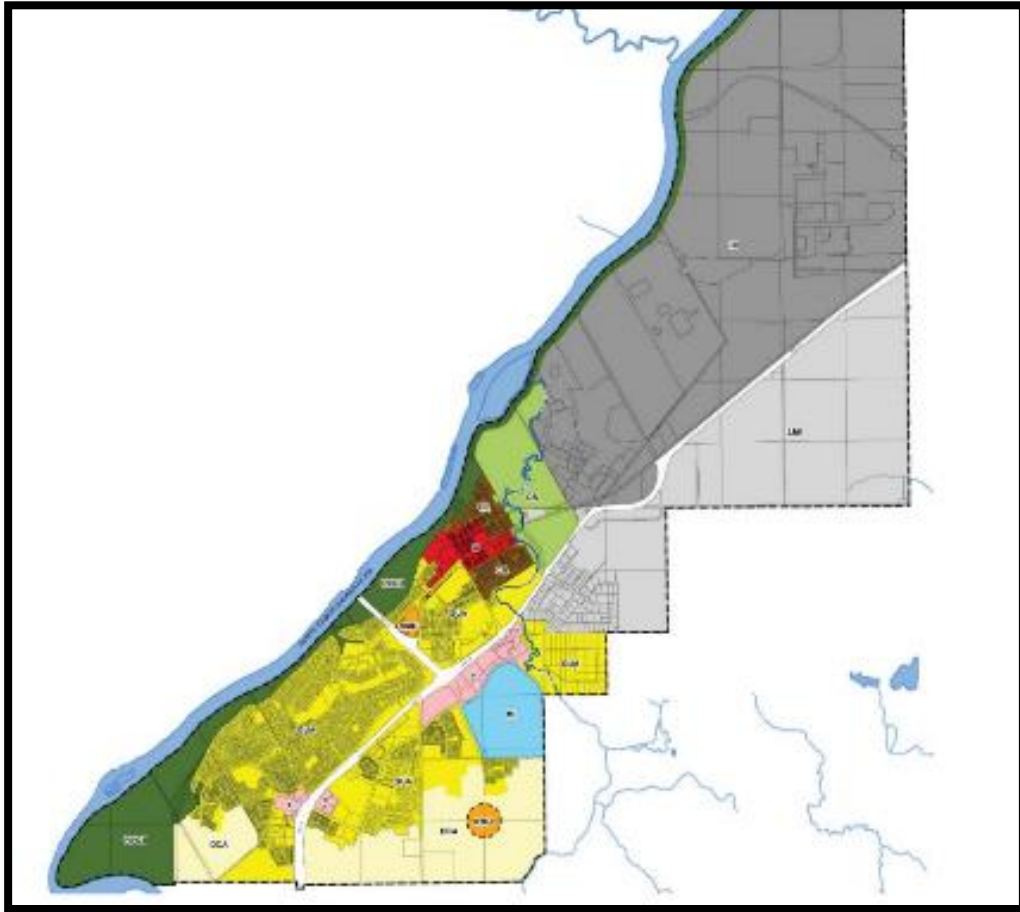
Light Starch

Green Vegetable

Leafy Greens





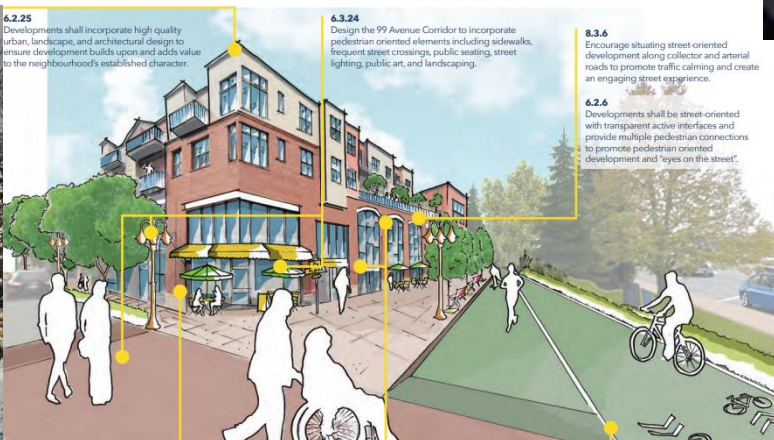
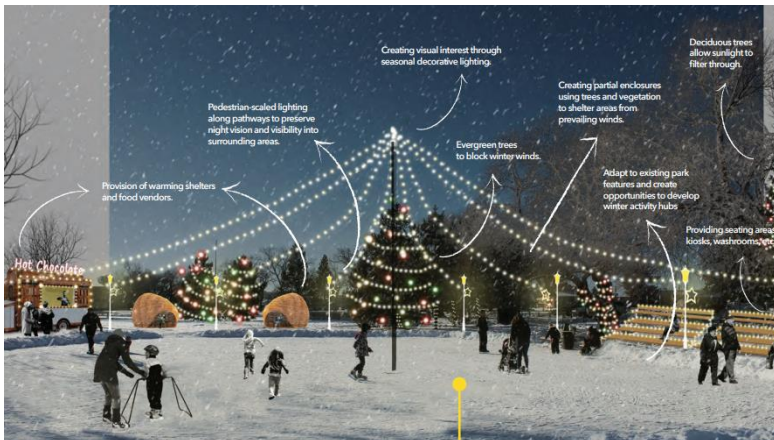




Cities are Habitats for People



# Ingredients of Place:

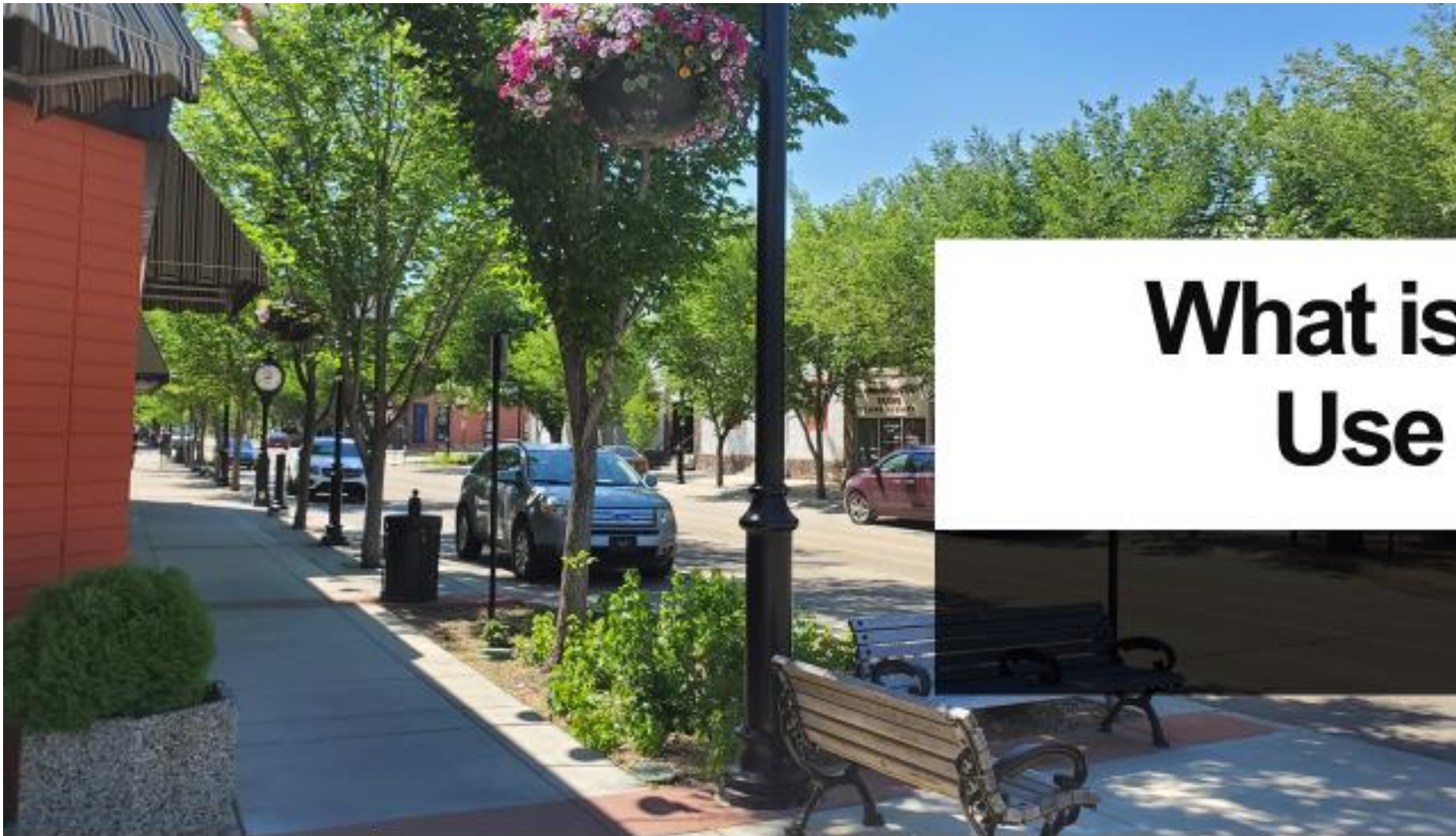




# CHARACTER AREAS OR "PLACETYPES"

- Downtown
- Mature Neighbourhoods
- Established Neighbourhoods
- Developing Neighbourhoods
- Future Urban Area
- Clover Park
- Major Employment Lands



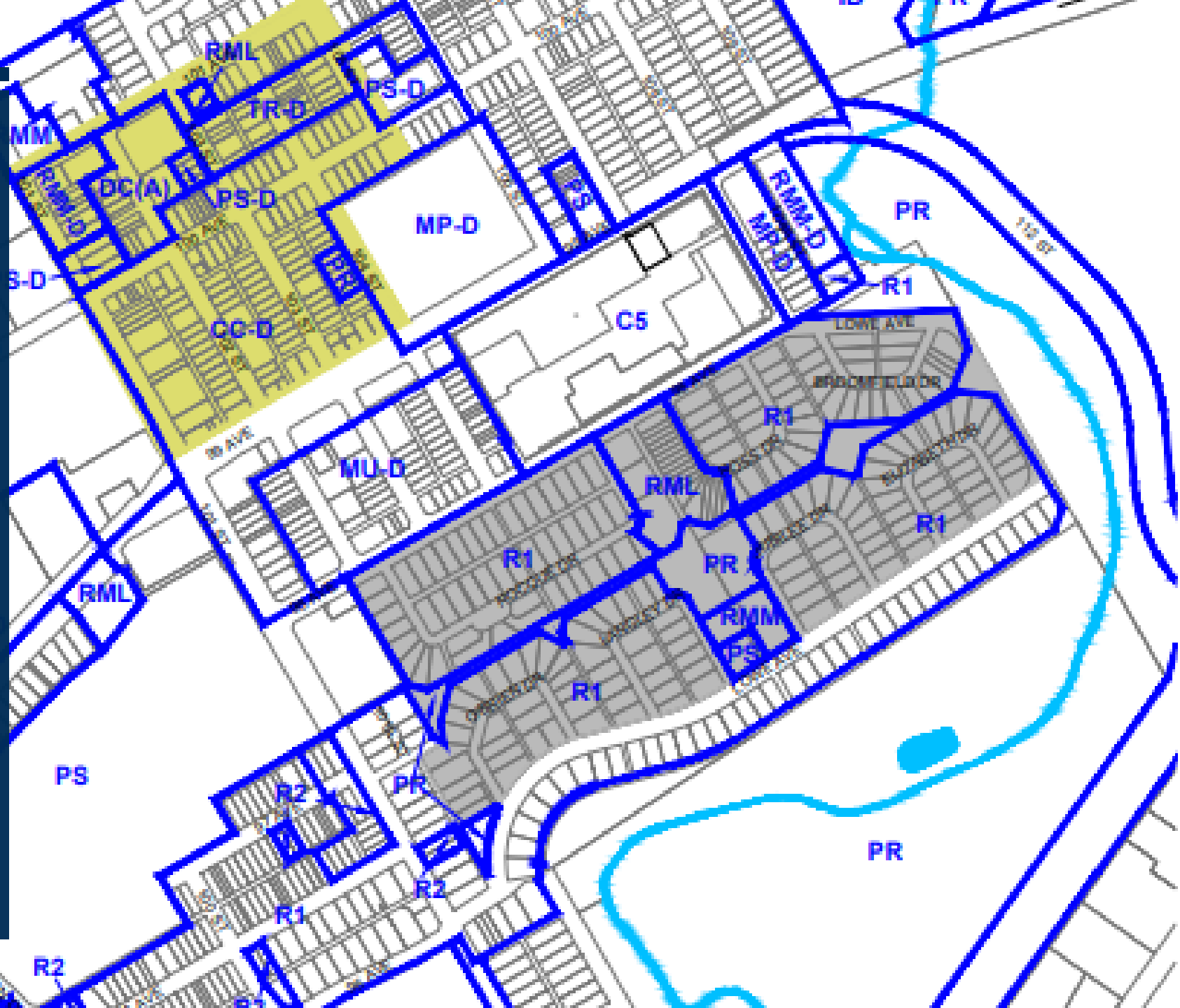


# What is a Land Use Bylaw?

THREE PARTS OF A  
LAND USE BYLAW

#1

Map



# THREE PARTS OF A LAND USE BYLAW

# #1

# Map

Residential  
Commercial  
Industrial  
Institutional  
Parks



# R1



# R2



# R3

# THREE PARTS OF A LAND USE BYLAW

## #2

# Use Table

### (b) R1 Permitted

- Home Office
- Secondary Suite
- Single Detached Housing

Accessory development to any use listed in subsection 6.12.2(b)

### (c) R1 Discretionary

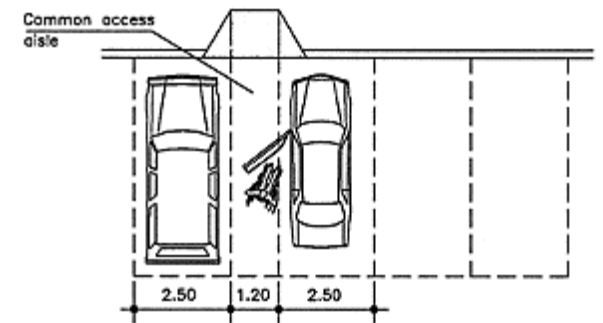
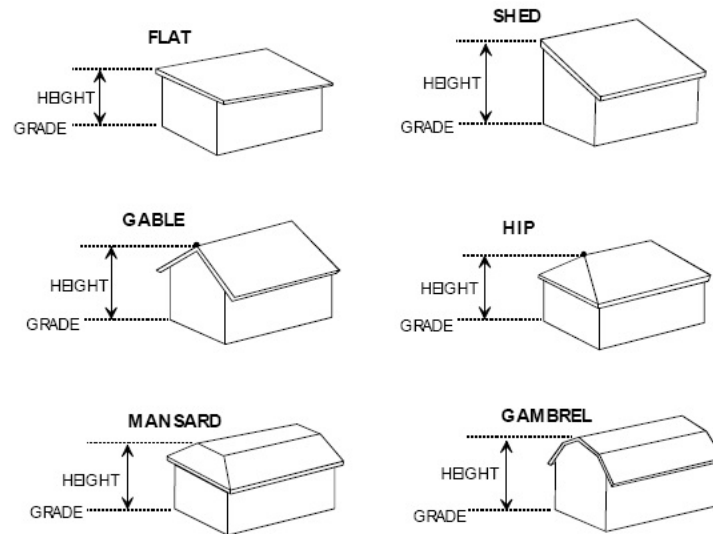
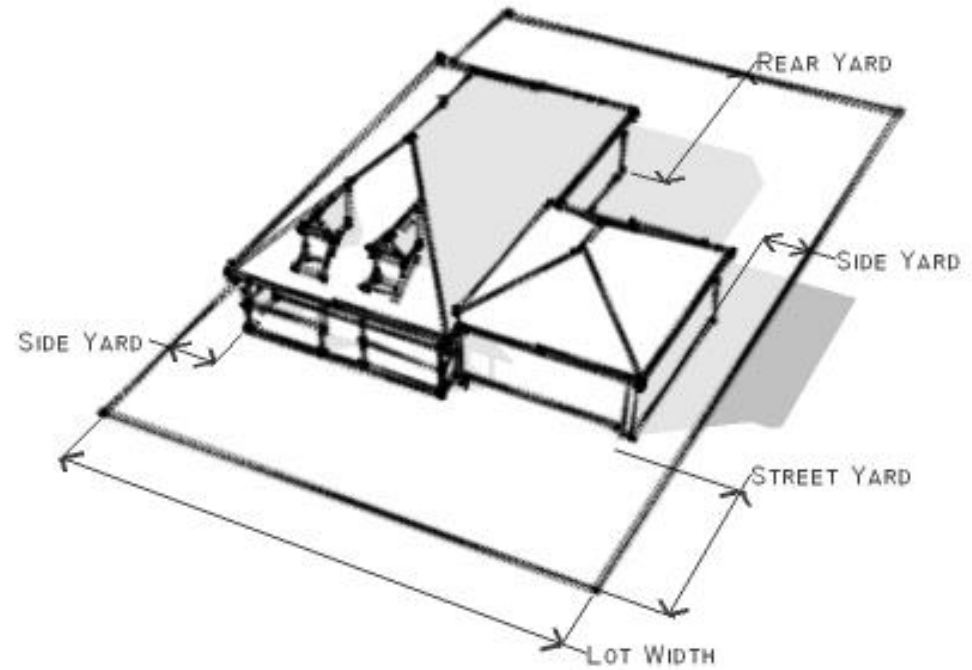
- Bed and Breakfast
- Boarding Facility
- Garage Suite
- Garden Suite
- Group Home (Limited)
- Home Business
- Show Home
- Temporary Sales Centre

Accessory development to any use listed in subsection 6.12.2(c)

# THREE PARTS OF A LAND USE BYLAW

## #3

# Development Standards



## SEEMS REASONABLE, RIGHT?

- Predictable
- Reasonable
- Minimizes Impacts



Live



For more info by app sharing contact visit us at [www.dunlop.com/india](http://www.dunlop.com/india)

Work



For more info by app sharing contact visit us at [www.dunlop.com/india](http://www.dunlop.com/india)

Play



For more info by app sharing contact visit us at [www.dunlop.com/india](http://www.dunlop.com/india)

Shop



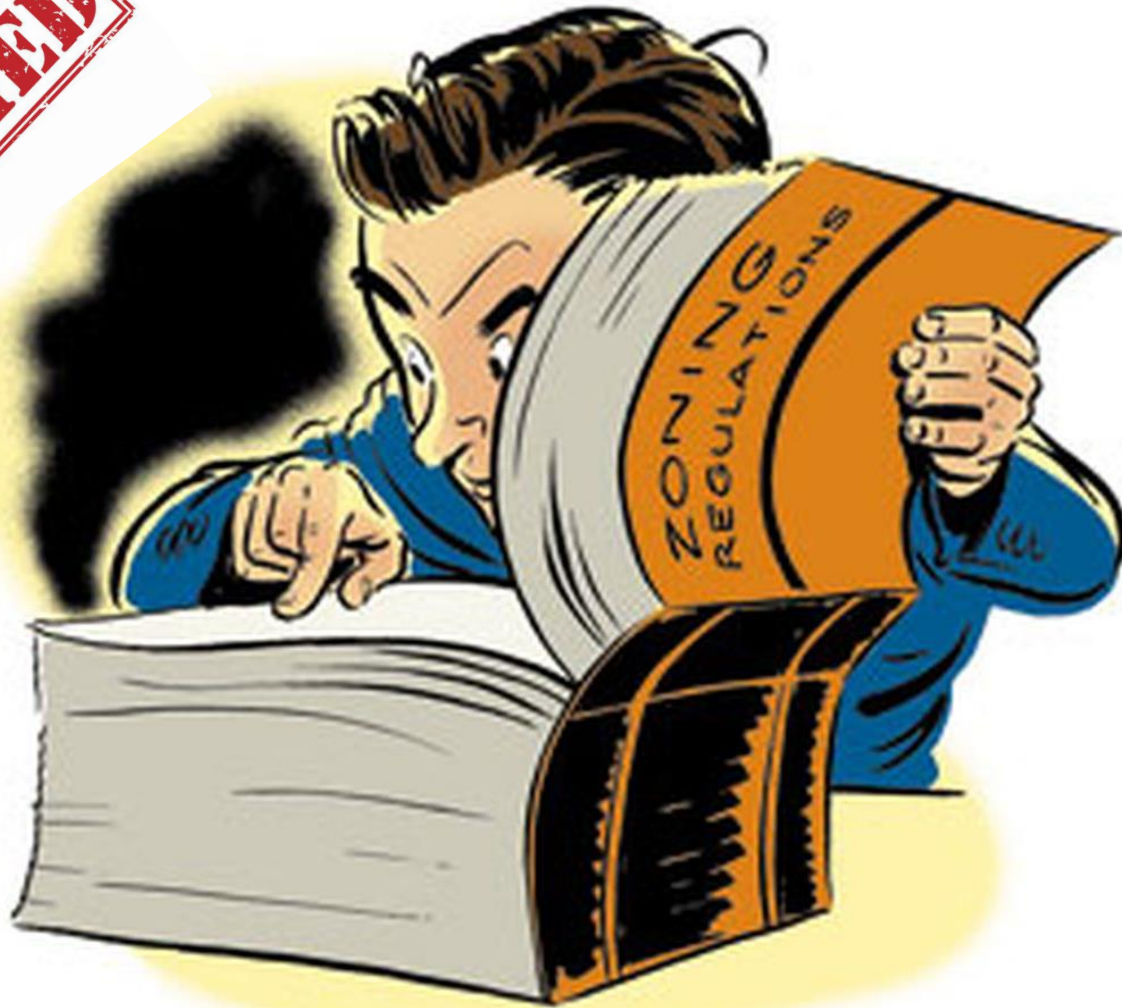


# SEGREGATION OF USES



**SAMENESS = PLACELESSNESS**

**DENIED**



**FOCUS ON  
WHAT CAN'T  
BE DONE**

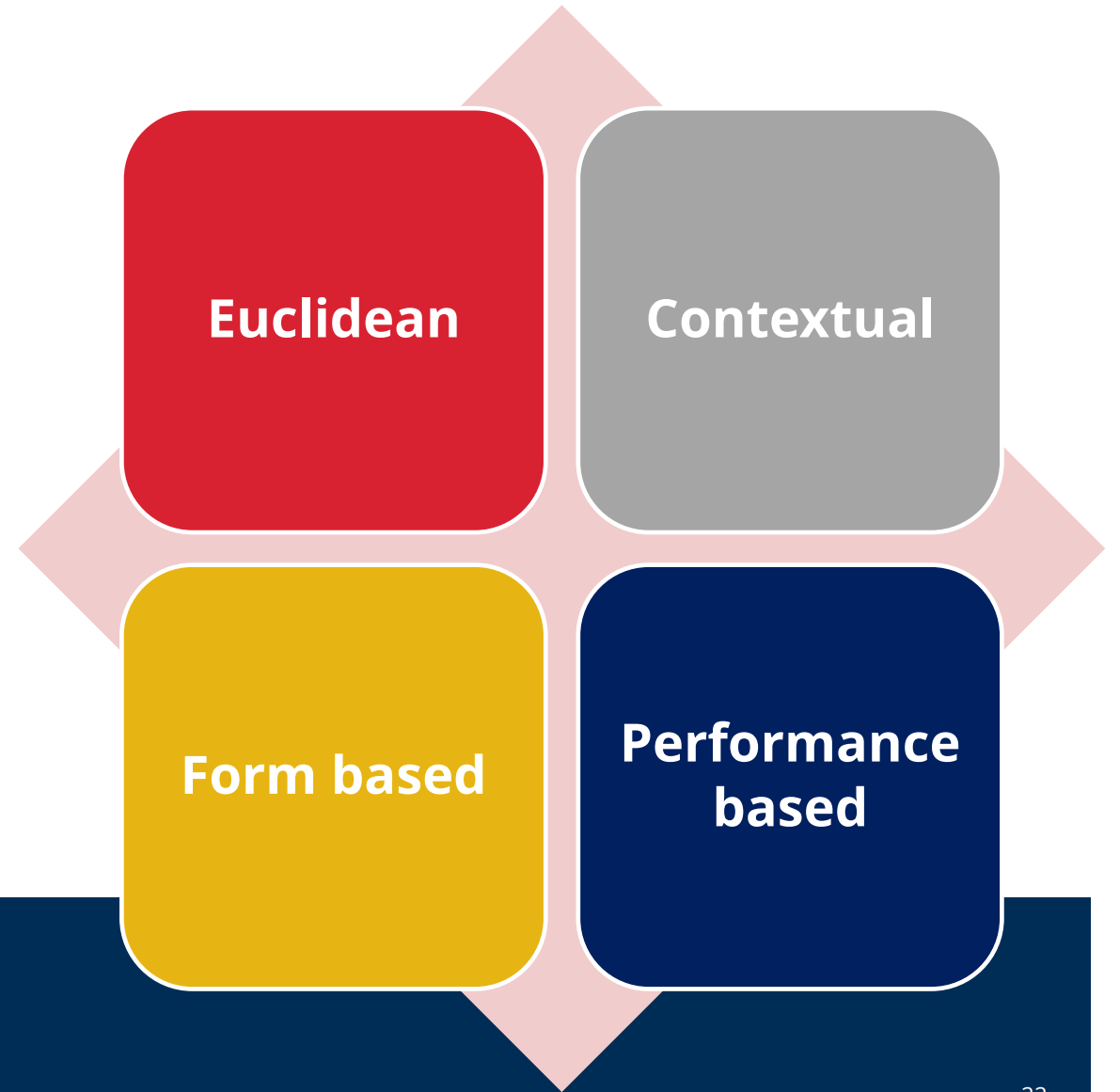


- Childcare
- Convenience Store
- Clothing Retail
- Accountant
- Dentist
- Printing
- Post Office
- Liquor Store
- Café
- Restaurant

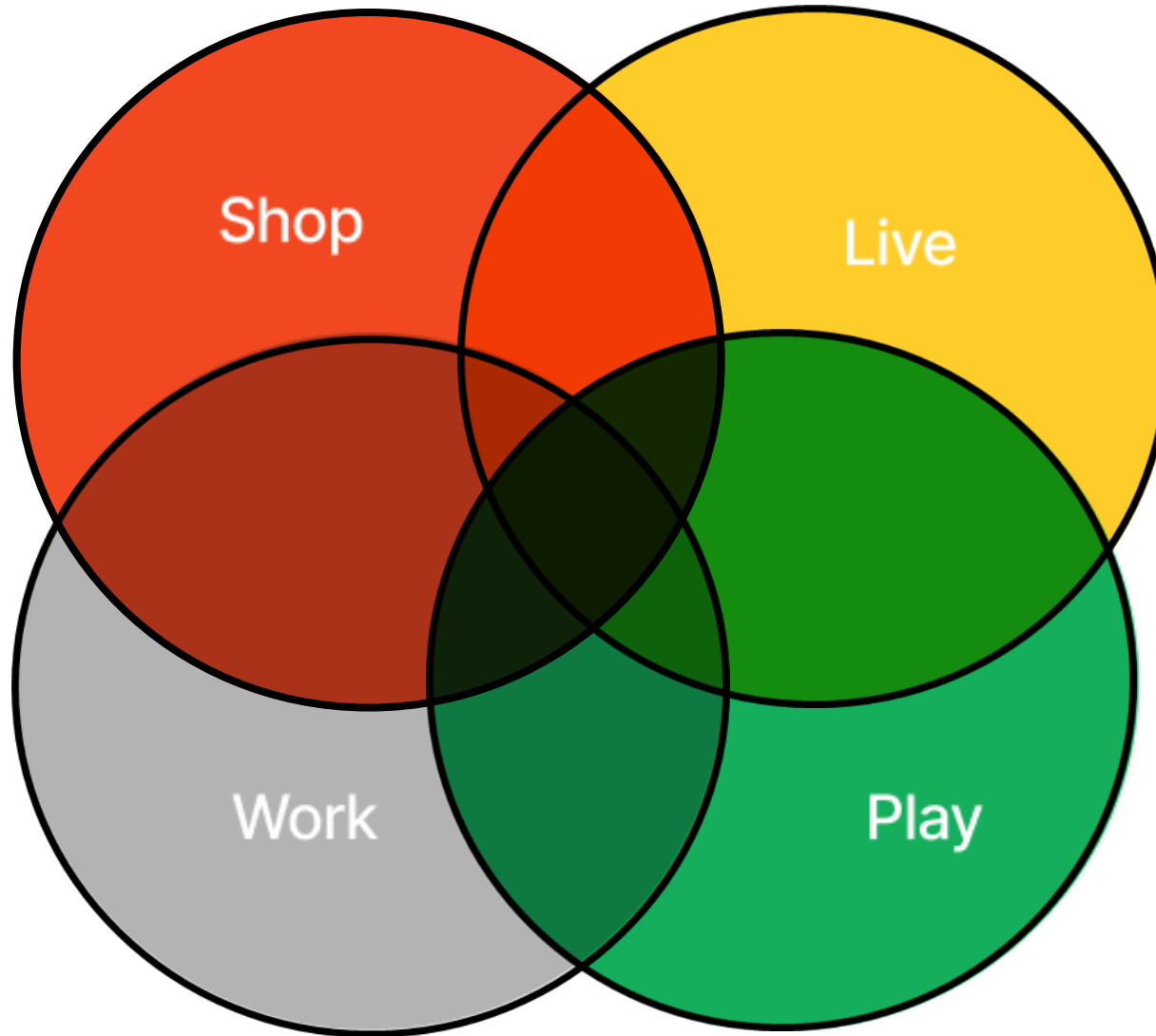


- General Service

# APPROACHES TO LAND USE REGULATION



# RESULT



For more step by step drawing tutorials visit us at [www.drawingtutorials101.com](http://www.drawingtutorials101.com)



# OLD VS NEW

## Traditional

- Does not recognize unique character areas
- Single Use Neighbourhoods
- Not conducive for "complete communities"
- Focus on "cannot"
- Hinders creativity

## New Land Use Bylaw

- Context-sensitive "Place-Based"
- Encourages diversity of housing
- Conducive for "complete communities"
- Emphasis on intent rather than checking the boxes
- Group uses that have similar impact





CITY OF  
FORT SASKATCHEWAN

Danke

Grazie

Merci

Дякую

Thank you

Ви благодарам





# Removing Barriers Through Edmonton's Land Use Bylaw

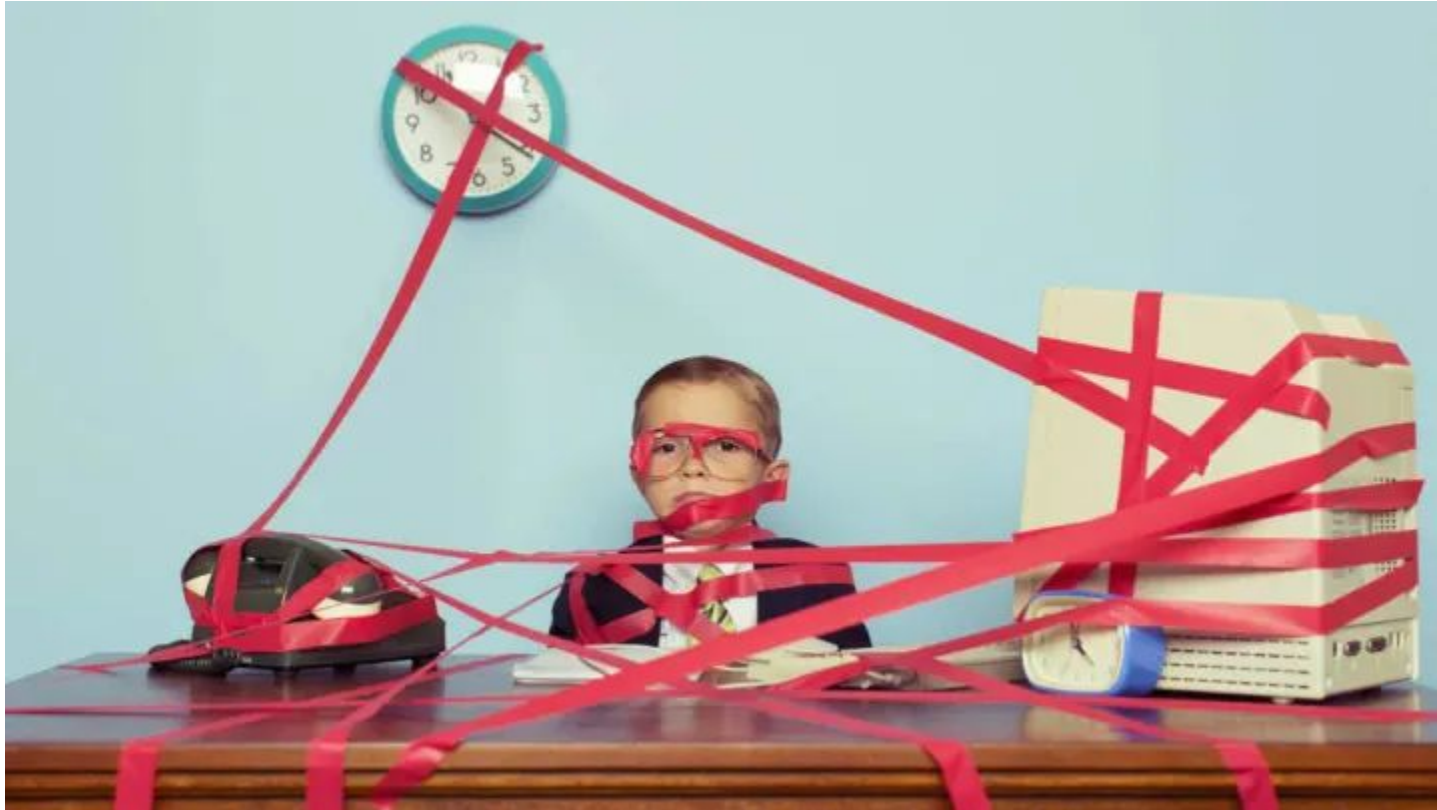
2023 CPAA Conference

**City of Edmonton**

Trevor Illingworth, Senior Planner, Zoning Bylaw Renewal

**Edmonton**

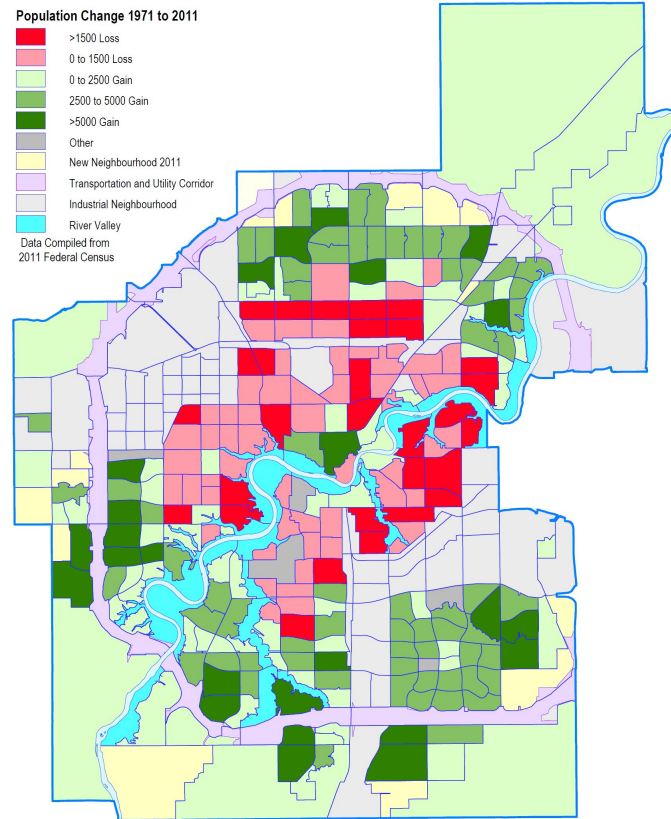
# Is zoning a barrier to the city we want?



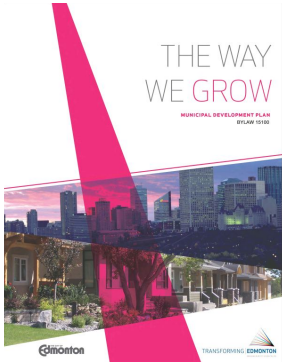
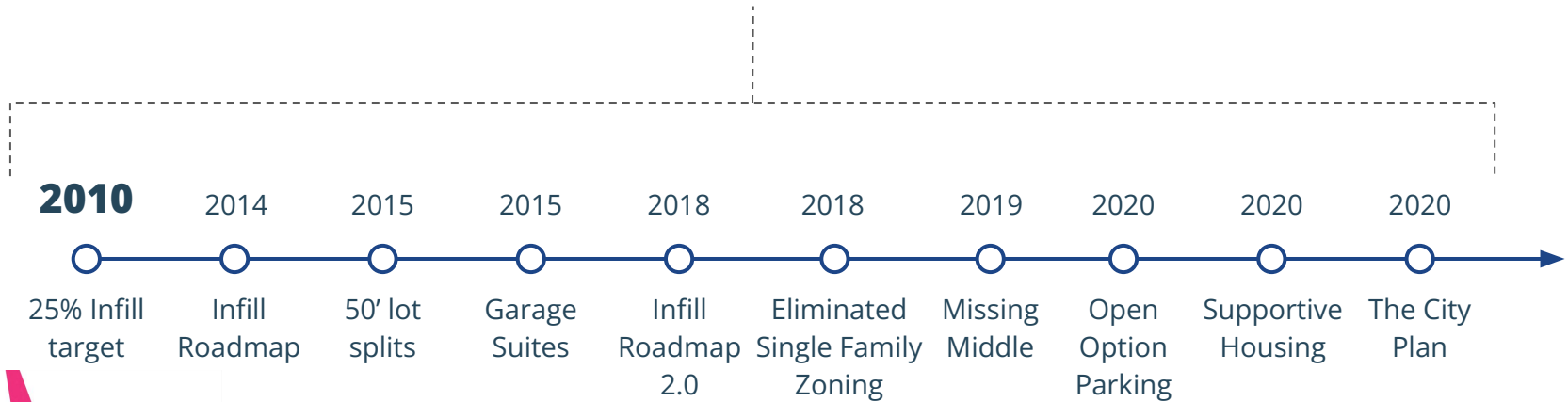
*Credit: RichVintage/iStock*

# Edmonton, 1971-2011

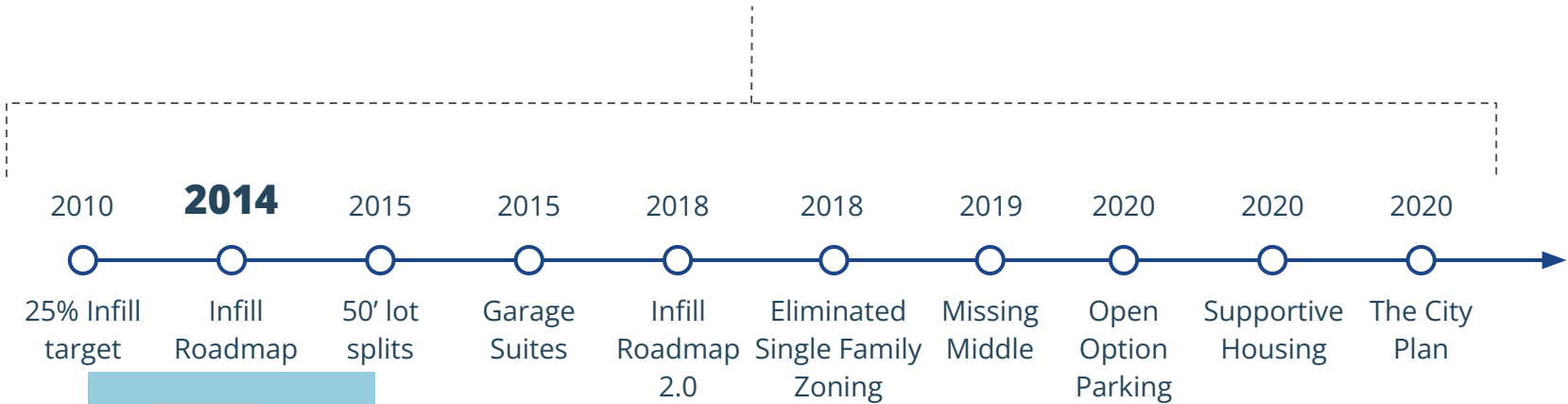
**-77,000** residents  
from mature and  
established  
neighbourhoods



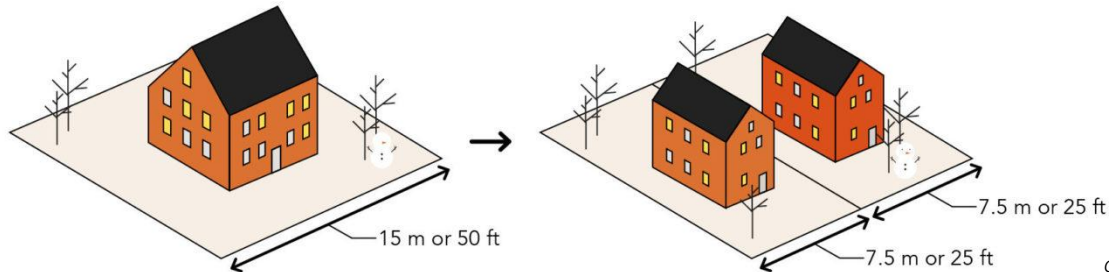
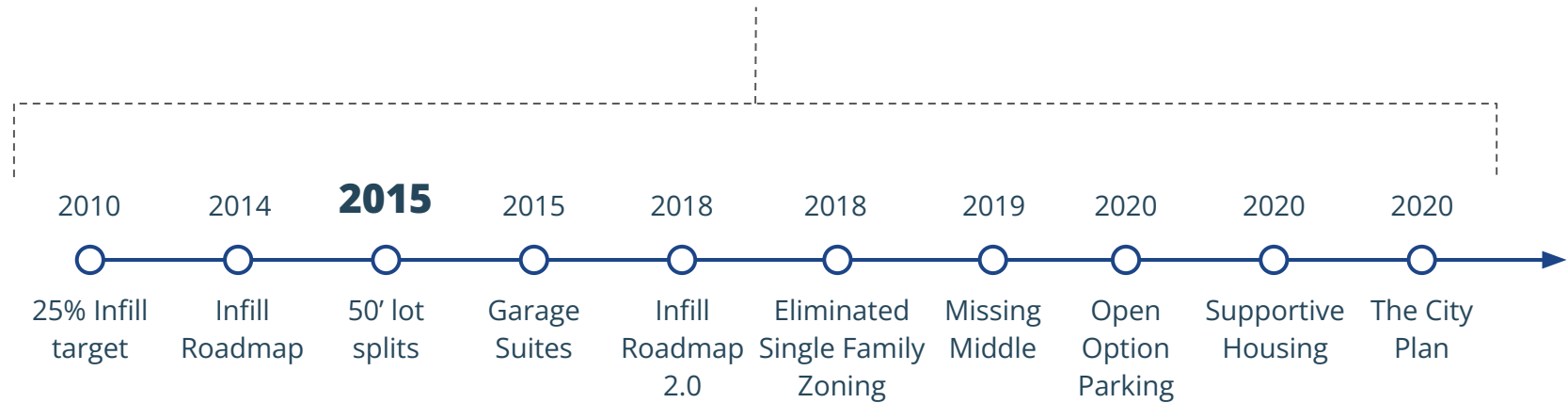
# Over a decade of **reducing and removing** zoning barriers



# Over a decade of **reducing and removing** zoning barriers

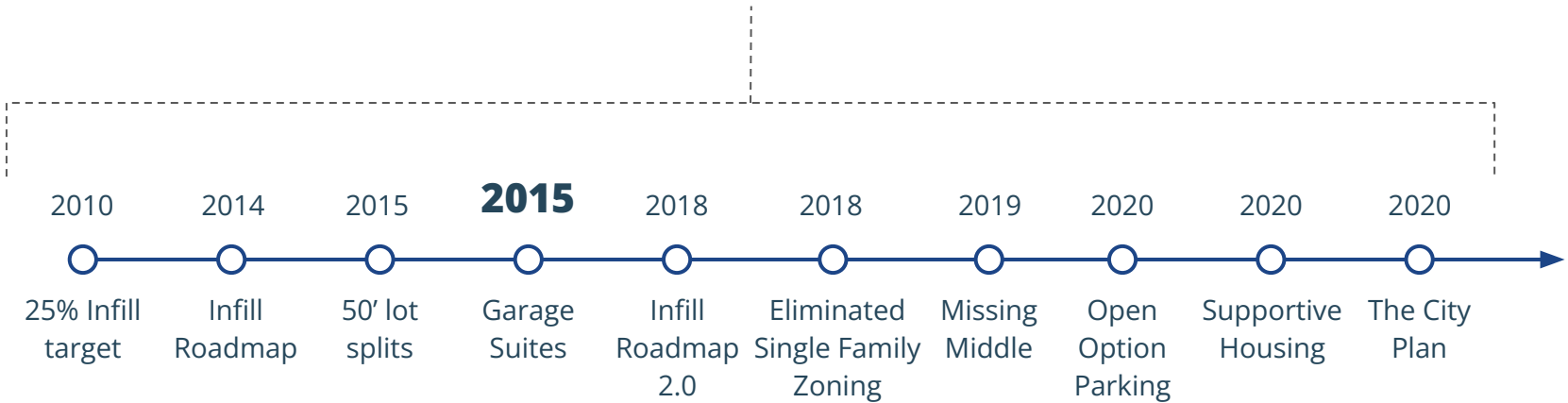


# Over a decade of **reducing and removing** zoning barriers



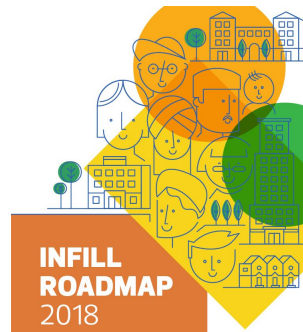
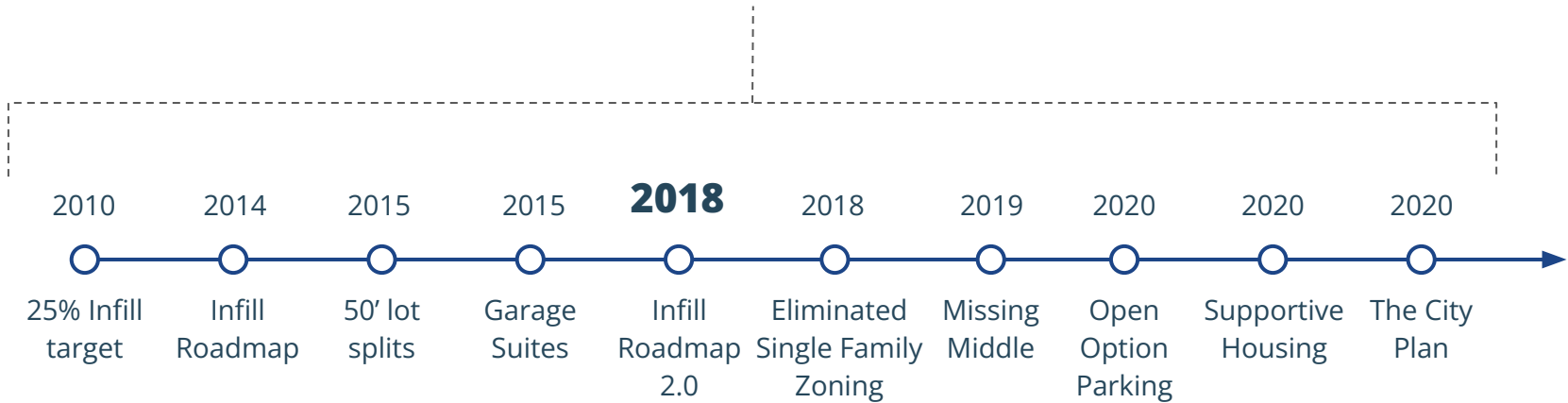
Credit: Situate Planning + Placemaking

# Over a decade of **reducing and removing** zoning barriers

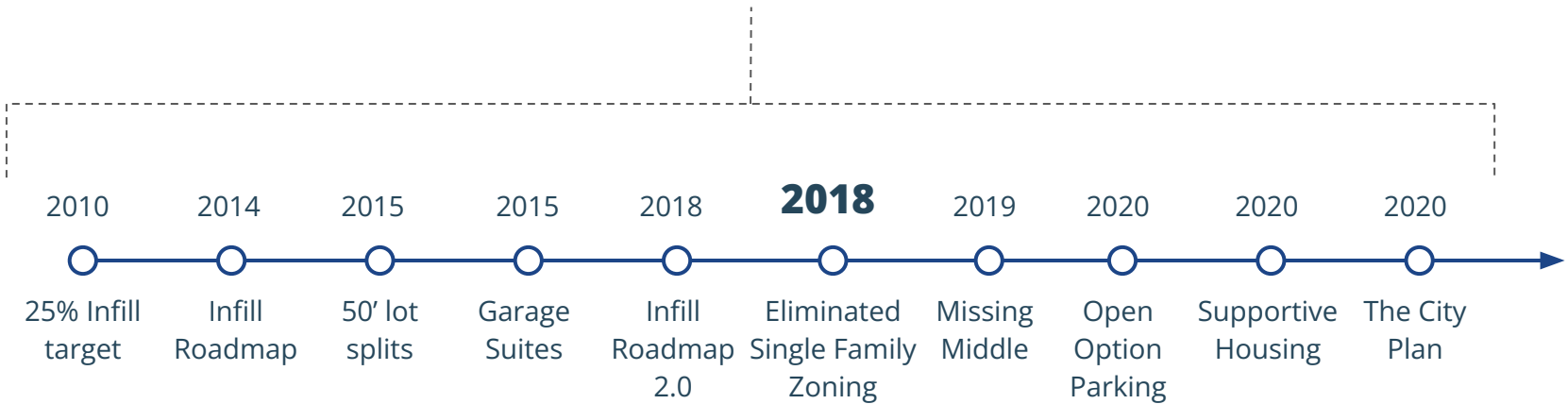




# Over a decade of **reducing and removing** zoning barriers

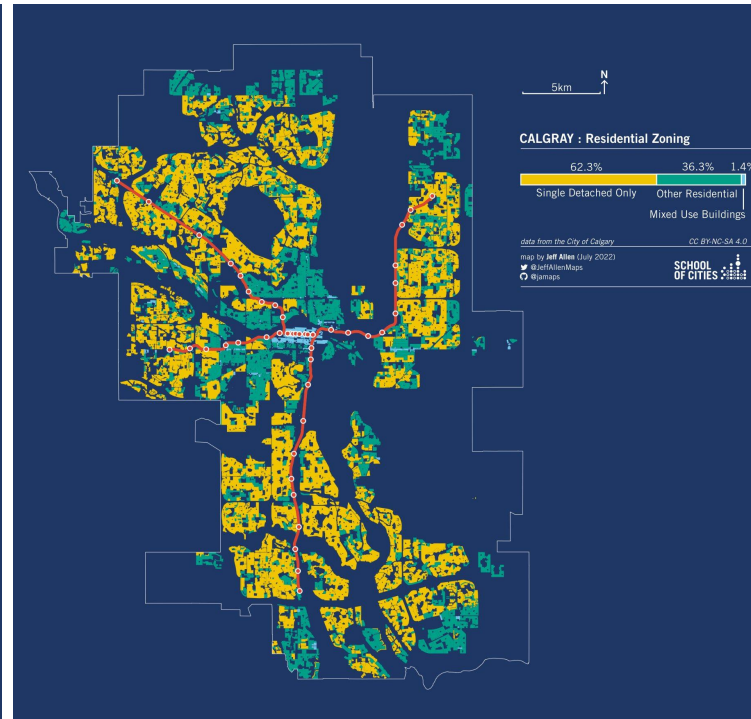
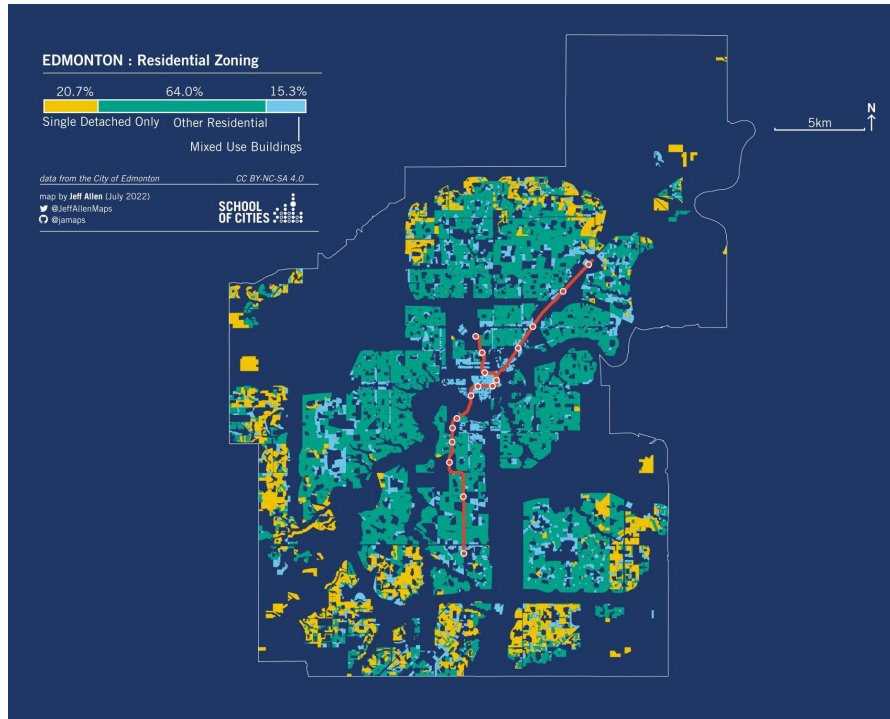


# Over a decade of **reducing and removing** zoning barriers



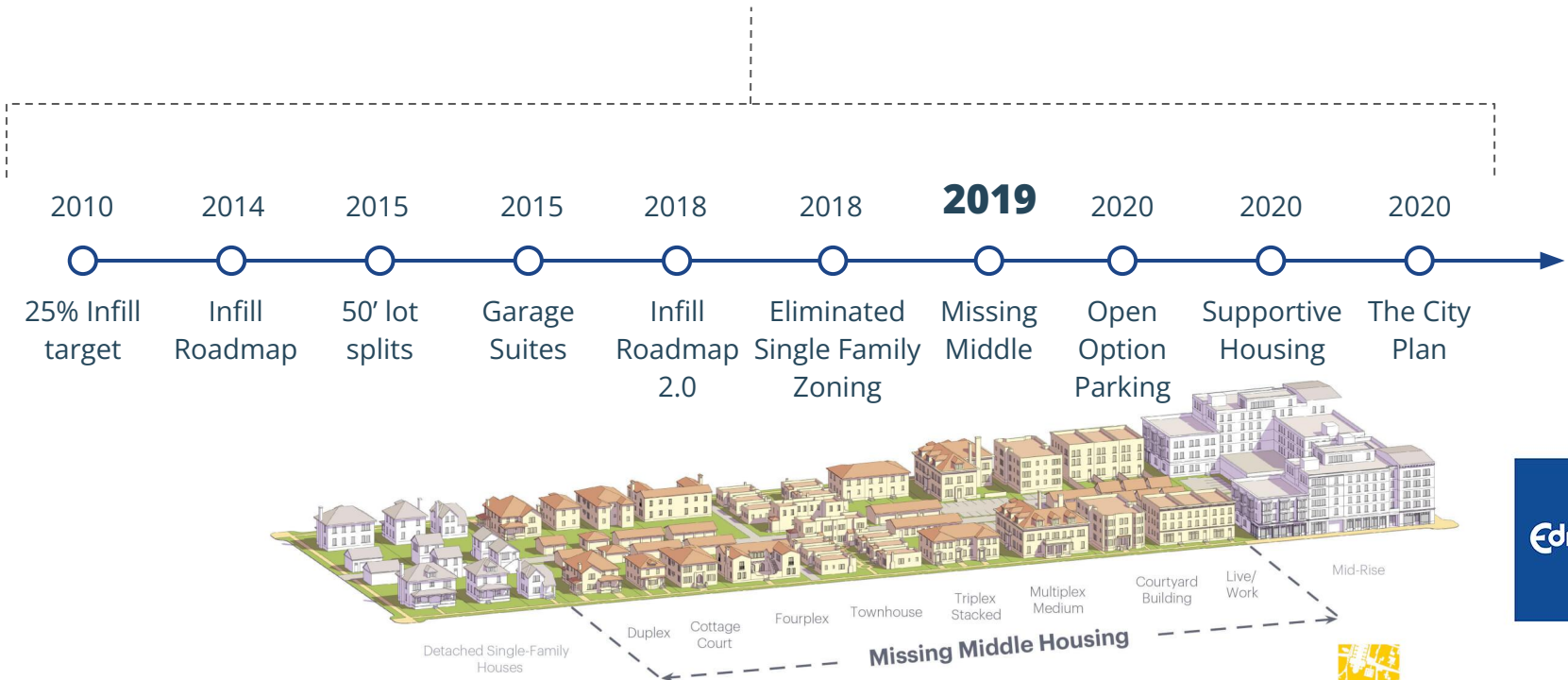
Credit: Ryan Herron/iStock

# Eliminating Single Family-only Zoning

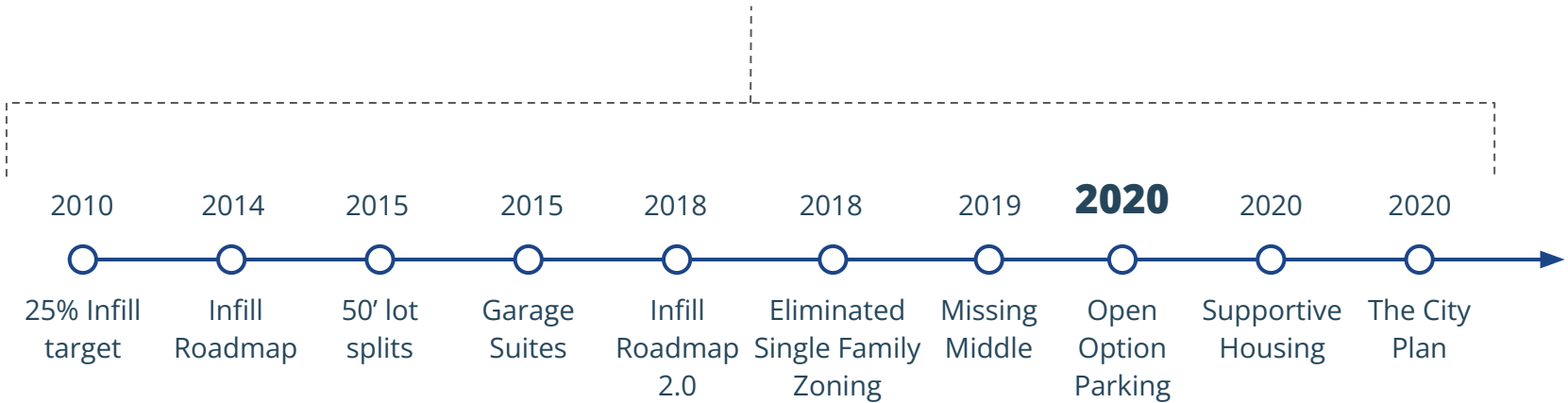


Credit: @JeffAllenMaps

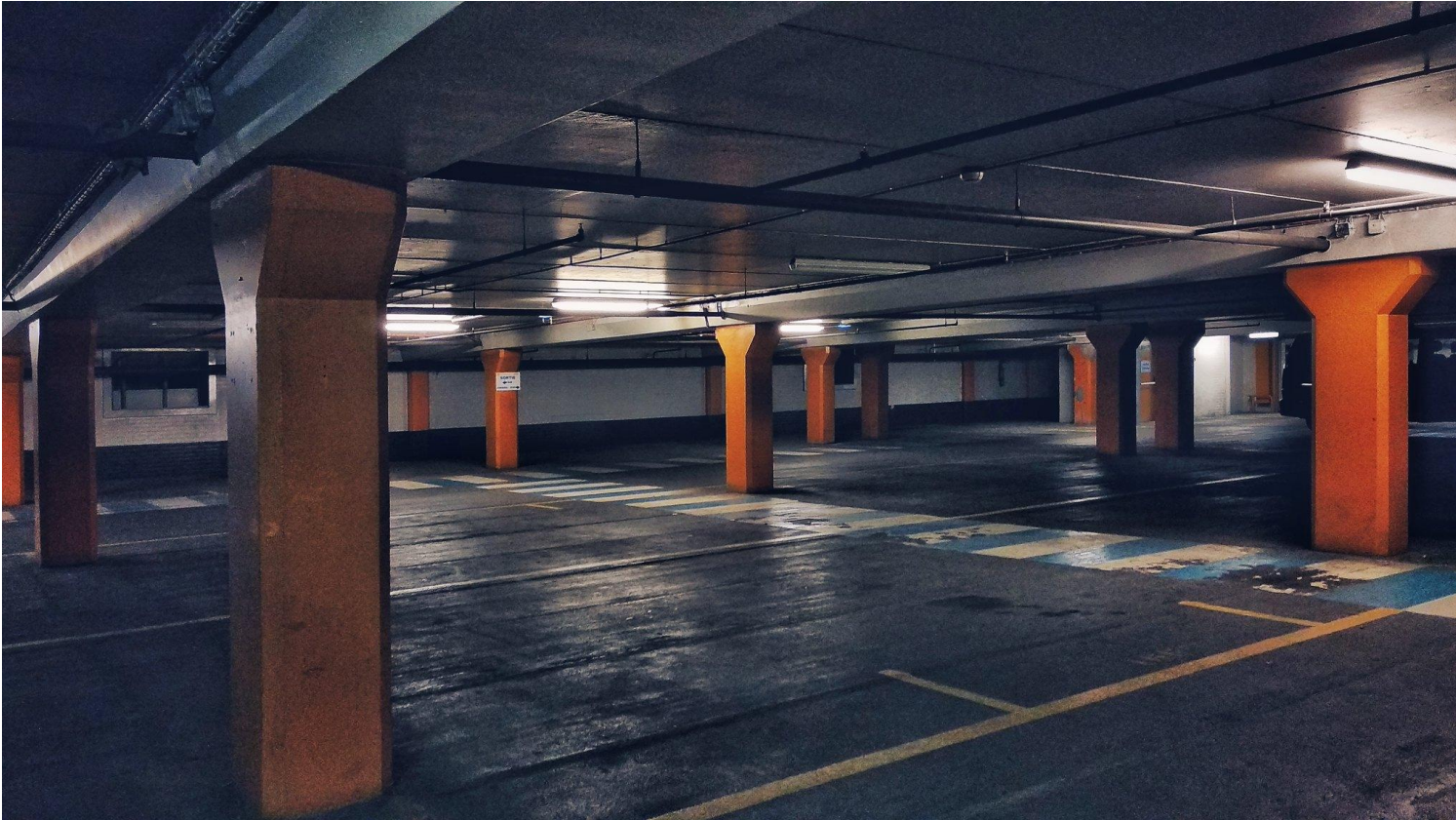
# Over a decade of **reducing and removing** zoning barriers



# Over a decade of **reducing and removing** zoning barriers



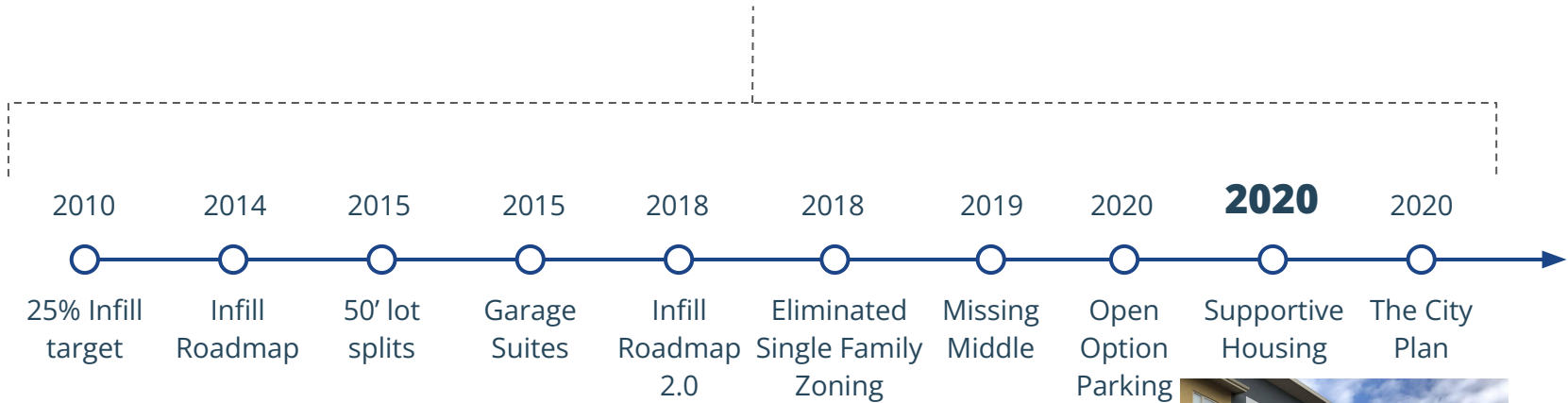
# Eliminating Minimum Parking Requirements



*Credit: Vincent WR*

Edmonton

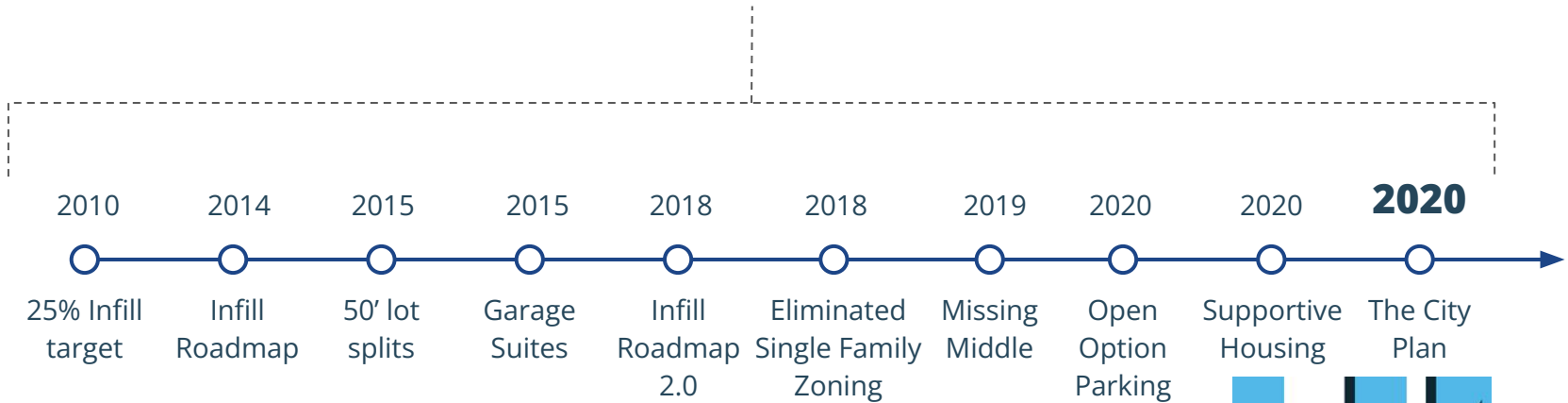
# Over a decade of **reducing and removing** zoning barriers



Edmonton

Credit: Rat Creek Press

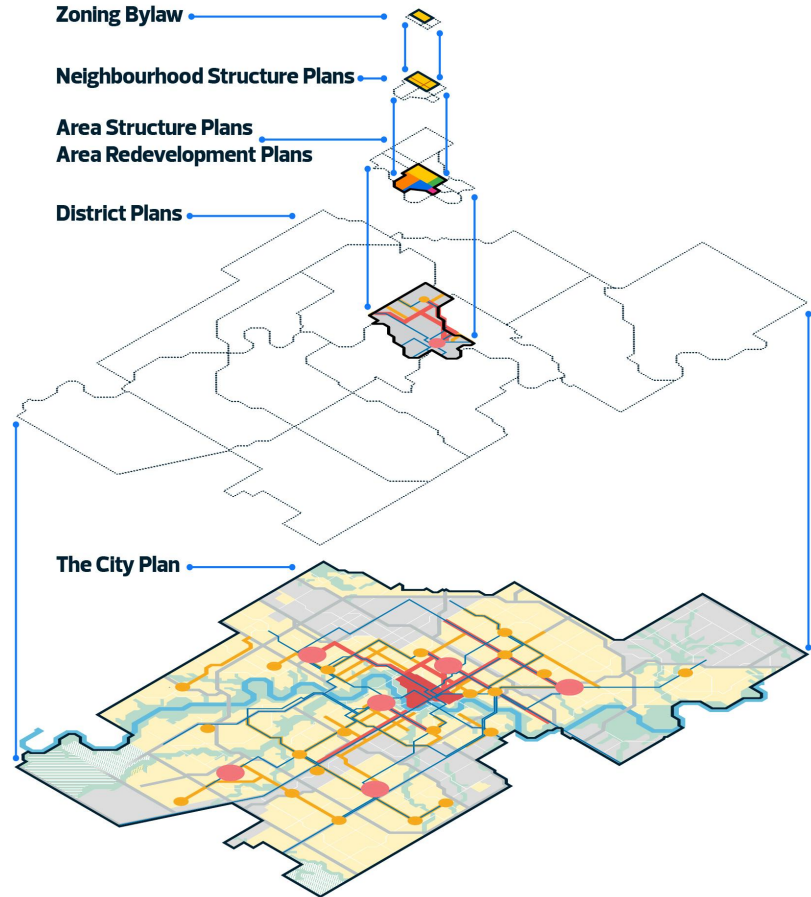
# Over a decade of **reducing and removing** zoning barriers





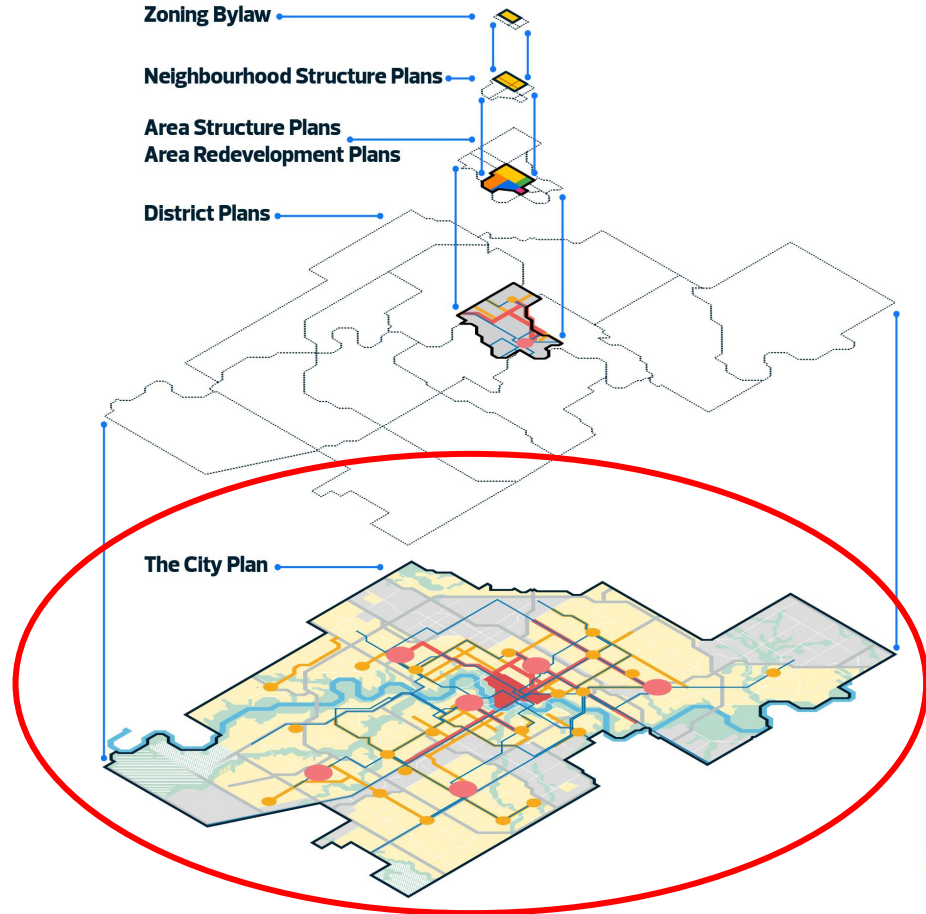
# Planning Context

- + The City Plan (MDP)
- + District Plans
- + Area Structure Plans / Area Redevelopment Plans
- + Neighbourhood Structure Plans
- + Zoning Bylaw (LUB)



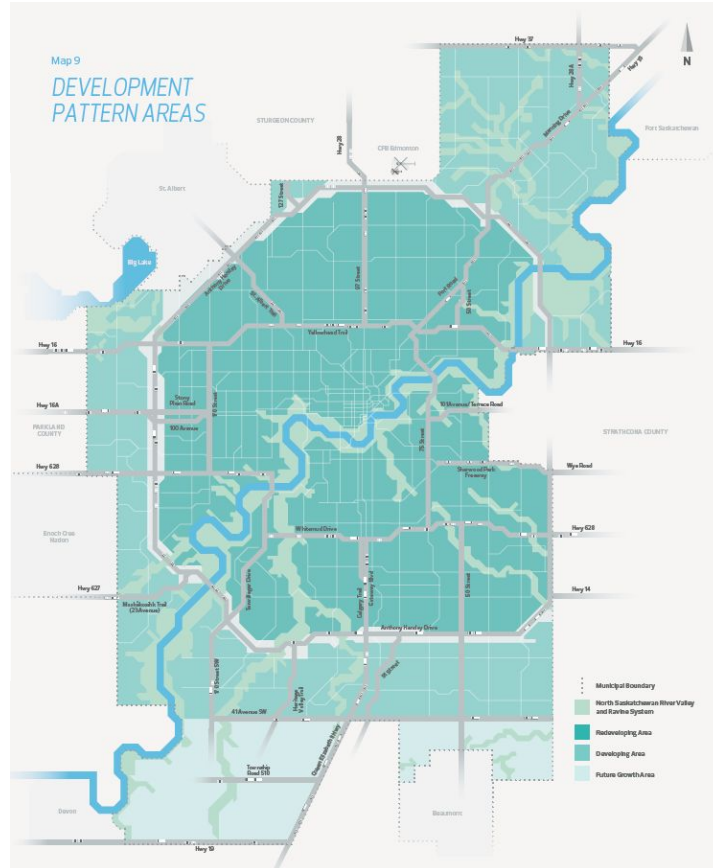
# Planning Context

- + **The City Plan (MDP)**
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- + Neighbourhood Structure Plans
- + Zoning Bylaw (LUB)



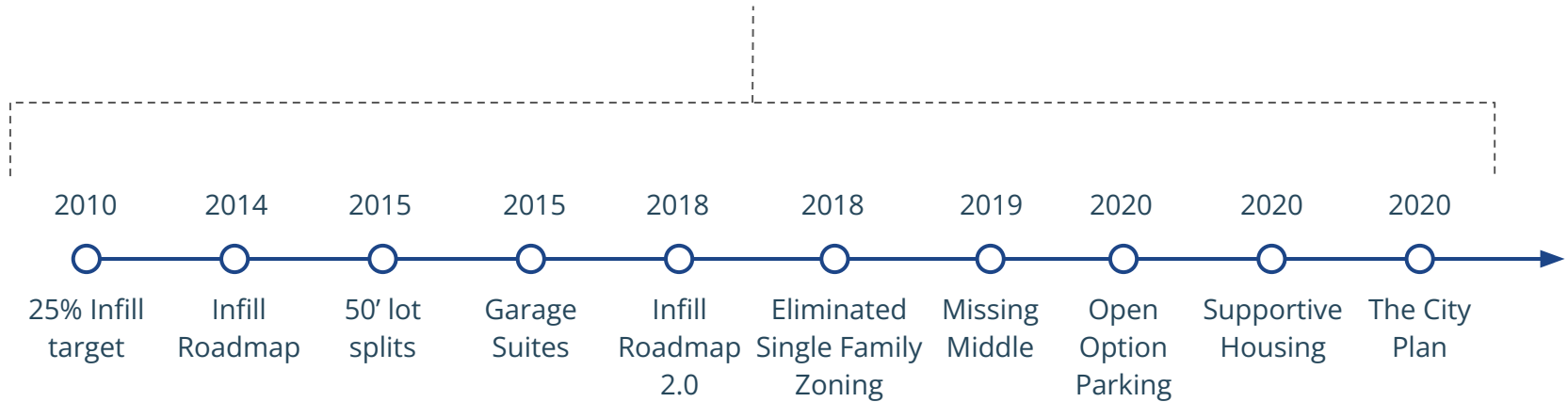
# The City Plan Redeveloping Area

Target: +600,000  
residents over  
~50 years





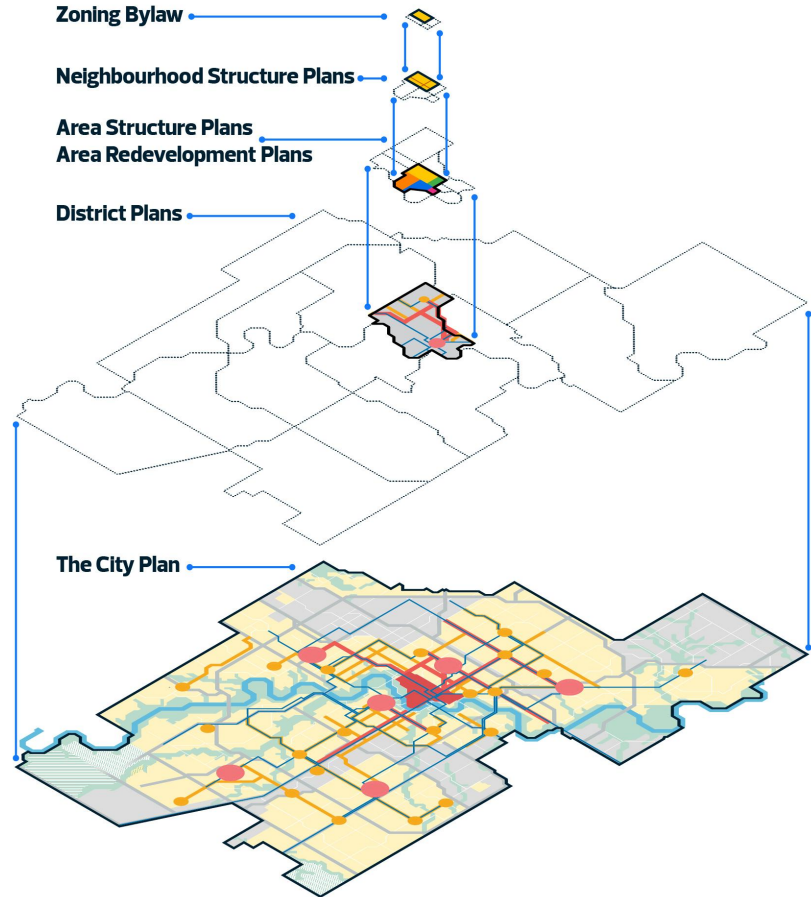
# Over a decade of **reducing and removing** zoning barriers



○ **2024** Zoning Bylaw Renewal

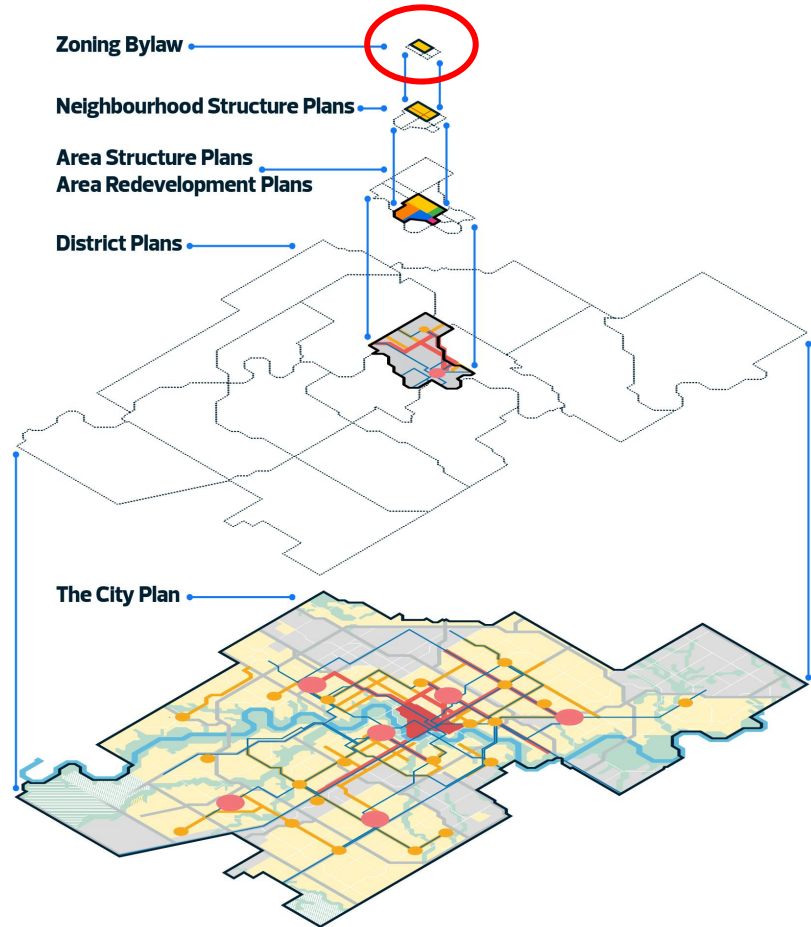
# Planning Context

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- + Area Structure Plans / Area Redevelopment Plans
- + Neighbourhood Structure Plans
- + Zoning Bylaw (LUB)



# Planning Context

- + The City Plan (MDP)
- + District Plans
- + Area Structure Plans / Area Redevelopment Plans
- + Neighbourhood Structure Plans
- + **Zoning Bylaw (LUB)**



# Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative

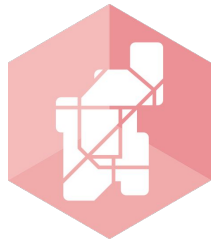
## Projects

### NEW ZONING BYLAW



Develop a **user-friendly** Zoning Bylaw that is **aligned** with City policies and directions

### REZONING



**Rezone** properties city-wide **to align** with the zones in the new Zoning Bylaw

### TECHNOLOGY



**Ensure a smooth transition** to a new Zoning Bylaw and new online tools (technology)

### IMPLEMENTATION



**Streamline & simplify** Zoning Bylaw regulations and associated services and processes



# Our Approach



1 New Layout  
and Interface



2 Accessible  
Language



3 More  
diagrams



4 Fewer, More Enabling  
and Inclusive Zones



5 Broader  
Uses



6 Purposeful and  
Enforceable Regulations

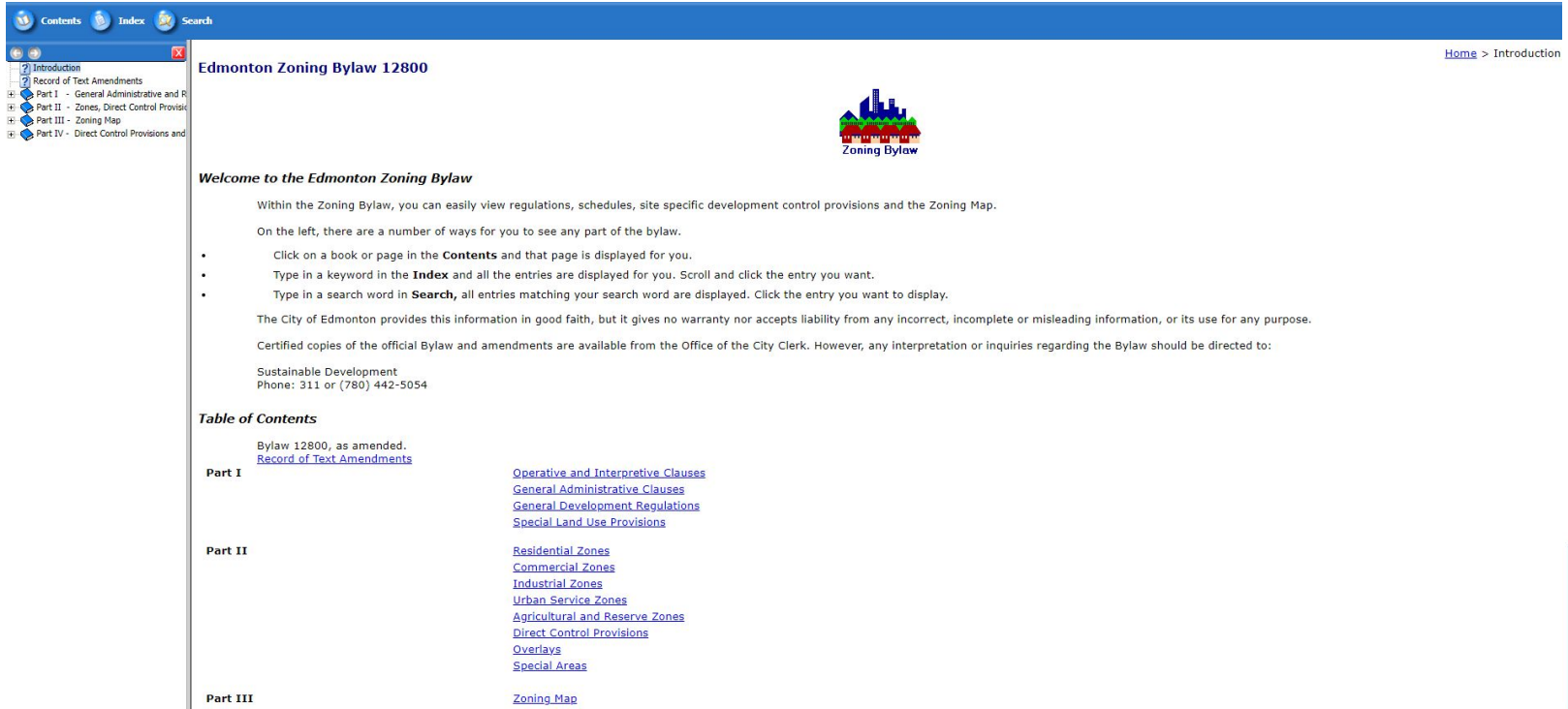


7 A Zoning Bylaw for  
Everyone



**Gender Based Analysis  
Plus Pilot Project**


# New Layout and Interface



The screenshot shows a web browser window with a blue header bar containing 'Contents', 'Index', and 'Search' buttons. A left sidebar lists navigation options: Introduction, Record of Text Amendments, Part I - General Administrative and R, Part II - Zones, Direct Control Provisi, Part III - Zoning Map, and Part IV - Direct Control Provisions and. The main content area is titled 'Edmonton Zoning Bylaw 12800' and features the City of Edmonton logo. The page includes a welcome message, instructions on how to use the 'Contents' and 'Search' features, a disclaimer, contact information for the City Clerk's office, and a 'Table of Contents' section with links to various parts of the bylaw.

Contents Index Search

Edmonton Zoning Bylaw 12800 [Home](#) > Introduction



**Welcome to the Edmonton Zoning Bylaw**

Within the Zoning Bylaw, you can easily view regulations, schedules, site specific development control provisions and the Zoning Map.

On the left, there are a number of ways for you to see any part of the bylaw.

- Click on a book or page in the **Contents** and that page is displayed for you.
- Type in a keyword in the **Index** and all the entries are displayed for you. Scroll and click the entry you want.
- Type in a search word in **Search**, all entries matching your search word are displayed. Click the entry you want to display.

The City of Edmonton provides this information in good faith, but it gives no warranty nor accepts liability from any incorrect, incomplete or misleading information, or its use for any purpose.

Certified copies of the official Bylaw and amendments are available from the Office of the City Clerk. However, any interpretation or inquiries regarding the Bylaw should be directed to:

Sustainable Development  
Phone: 311 or (780) 442-5054

**Table of Contents**

Bylaw 12800, as amended.  
[Record of Text Amendments](#)

<b>Part I</b>	<a href="#">Operative and Interpretive Clauses</a> <a href="#">General Administrative Clauses</a> <a href="#">General Development Regulations</a> <a href="#">Special Land Use Provisions</a>
<b>Part II</b>	<a href="#">Residential Zones</a> <a href="#">Commercial Zones</a> <a href="#">Industrial Zones</a> <a href="#">Urban Service Zones</a> <a href="#">Agricultural and Reserve Zones</a> <a href="#">Direct Control Provisions</a> <a href="#">Overlays</a> <a href="#">Special Areas</a>
<b>Part III</b>	<a href="#">Zoning Map</a>

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[Commercial Zones](#)  
[Industrial Zones](#)  
[Urban Service Zones](#)  
[Agricultural and Reserve Zones](#)  
[Direct Control Provisions](#)  
[Overlays](#)  
[Special Areas](#)

**Part III** [Zoning Map](#)

**Zoning Bylaw**

# New Layout and Interface

Edmonton Draft Zoning Bylaw

Zoning Map (coming soon) Record of Text Amendments Bylaw PDF Search Q

## Start here

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Part 2 - Standard Zones and Overlays +
- Part 3 - Special Area Zones +
- Part 4 - Direct Control Zones +
- Part 5 - General Development Regulations +
- Part 6 - Specific Development Regulations +
- Part 7 - Administrative and Interpretive Clauses +

## The New Home for the City of Edmonton's Zoning Bylaw

Welcome to the future home of the new City of Edmonton's Zoning Bylaw.

Pending the bylaw's approval at public hearing in October 2023, the new Zoning Bylaw will come into effect on January 1, 2024. The new Zoning Bylaw will be housed on this new online platform with a new organizational structure and graphics to help make the bylaw easier to understand and use. The platform currently contains some draft content from the new Zoning Bylaw.

The new Zoning Bylaw website's development will happen in 2 phases.

**Phase I - Completed December 2022**

Build the new platform with the following considerations:

- A modern appearance
- New pop-up displays for additional information
- Accessibility features such as image captions
- Easy-access links to the new interactive Zoning Map (location of link identified) and to the record of Zoning Bylaw text amendments.

**Phase II - Anticipated October 2023**

Refine the platform based on feedback received in Phase I and items previously identified for consideration.

# Accessible Language: Before

1. Site and building layouts shall include design elements that take the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) into consideration, particularly for commercial, industrial, multi-unit residential Uses and Vehicle Parking Uses. These elements may include, but are not limited to: elements that allow for natural surveillance, increase sightlines and activity; and high quality interior and exterior lighting. The physical layout and landscaping shall reduce the vulnerability of pedestrians by avoiding areas of concealment or entrapment such as: long public corridor spaces, stairwells, or other movement predictors);,; avoiding landscaping hazards such as: unpruned trees, rocks that can be thrown, or blind corners; and by locating Vehicle Parking areas close to building access points and by using wayfinding mechanisms. The Development Officer may require a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design assessment prepared by a qualified security consultant, or similar professional, and may apply conditions to the approval of the Development Permit based on the recommendations of the CPTED assessment to promote a safe physical environment.

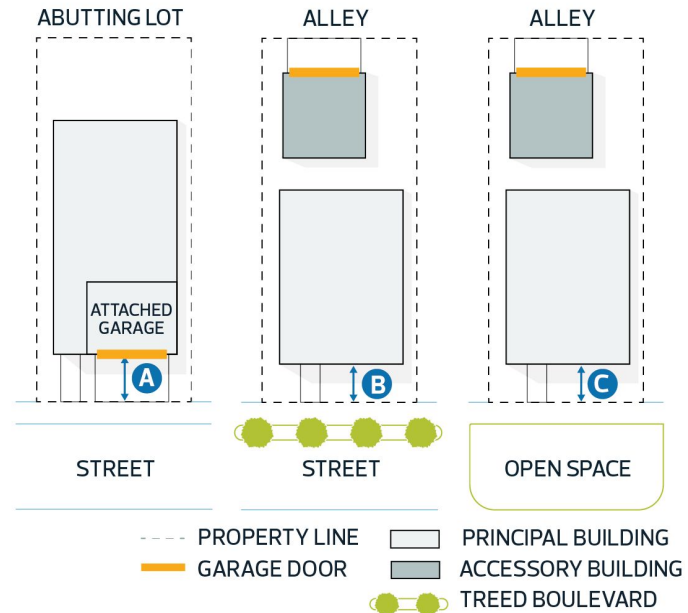
# Accessible Language: After

- 1.1 All developments must include the following design elements to promote a safe urban environment by providing natural surveillance, clear sightlines and wayfinding:
  - 1.1.1 Outdoor spaces must be well-lit.
  - 1.1.2 Entrapment spots and blind corners must be avoided or sufficiently mitigated.
  - 1.1.3 Pathways and building access points, where provided, must be clearly defined.
  - 1.1.4 Developments must provide clear signage, or other wayfinding techniques, where applicable.
- 1.2 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessments must be prepared by a qualified security consultant, architect, or similar professional.
- 1.3 CPTED assessments must include the following content and recommended mitigation measures, where applicable:
  - 1.3.1 Site context, including Site location and surrounding developments;
  - 1.3.2 project overview;
  - 1.3.3 building design, including stairwells and access points;
  - 1.3.4 Parking Areas;
  - 1.3.5 security features and access controls;
  - 1.3.6 outdoor lighting;
  - 1.3.7 outdoor signage, or other wayfinding techniques;
  - 1.3.8 sightlines, blind corners, and potential entrapment spots;
  - 1.3.9 Pathways;
  - 1.3.10 Landscaping;
  - 1.3.11 public spaces; and
  - 1.3.12 any other relevant content.

# More Diagrams

Table 1.1 Front Setback Regulations

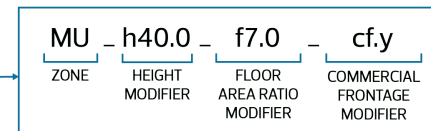
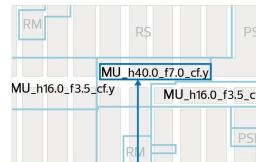
Section	Regulation	Value	Symbol
1.1.1	Minimum Front Setback	4.5 m	<b>A</b>
<b>Unless 1 or more of the following applies:</b>			
1.1.2	Minimum Front Setback where a Treed Boulevard is provided and vehicle access is from an Alley	3.0 m	<b>B</b>
1.1.3	Minimum Front Setback where the development is for Reverse Housing	3.0 m	<b>C</b>



# Fewer, More Enabling Zones

## Proposed Actions:

- + Reduction from **46 to 24** standard zones
- + Focus more on regulating form and impact; allow wider range of uses
- + Increased flexibility built in to reduce requirement for rezoning
- + Reduce reliance on site-specific direct control zoning
- + Introduction of 'Zone Modifiers'





# Fewer, More Enabling Zones: Case Study



# Fewer, More Enabling Zones: Case Study



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# Broader Uses

## Proposed Actions:

Reduce and consolidate uses: from **125 to 51**

- + Consolidate similar uses into broader use categories
- + Regulate activities according to land use impacts
- + Single 'Residential' use class combining all housing arrangements

Reducing discretionary uses

- + Provide additional development regulations in each zone for specific uses to mitigate potential land use impacts

# Residential Use: Single Detached Housing



# Residential Use: Semi-detached & Duplexes



# Residential Use: Row Housing



# Residential Use: Backyard Housing





# Residential Use: Small Apartments



# Residential Use: Cluster Housing



# Purposeful and Enforceable Regulations:

## Decision Informing Tool

- + Is there a legal requirement to regulate this?
- + Is it a land use issue?
- + Is it a health and safety issue?
- + Would regulating this align with long term policy?
- + Will it have an equity impact?
- + What are the service impacts? Does it simplify the development process?
- + Is it enforceable? Would it be a priority to enforce this if there was a complaint?
- + Is there an alternate means of regulation (ie, another bylaw)?

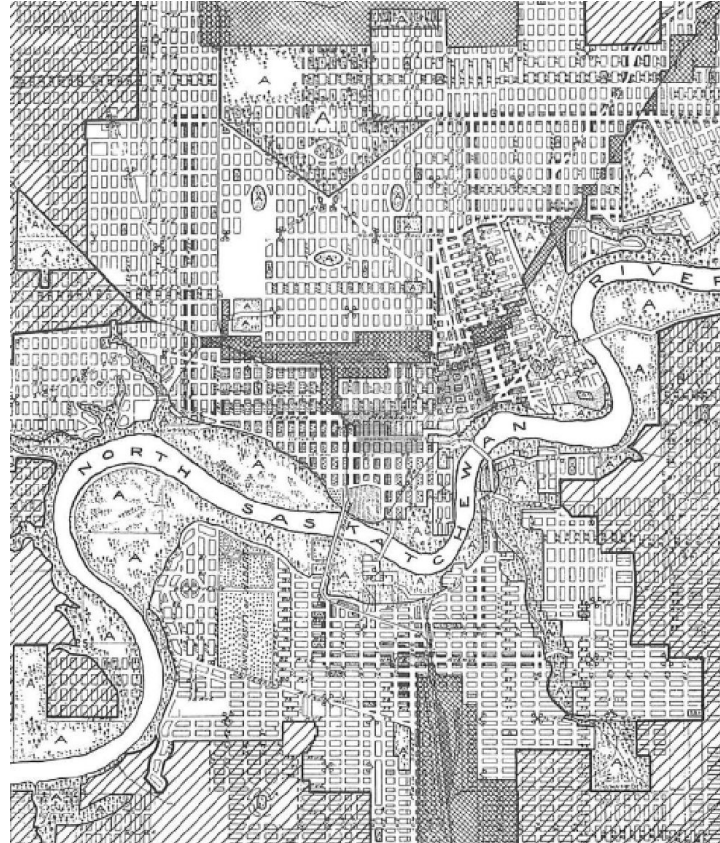
# A Zoning Bylaw for Everyone:

## Equity and the Zoning Bylaw

- + Advance The City Plan's vision for an inclusive & compassionate city
- + Reflect Edmonton's current size, future direction, and diversity:
  - Accommodate all housing needs
  - Support informal gatherings, recreation, arts, culture, and spirituality
  - Foster greater clarity and understanding of the bylaw, enabling more people to engage and use
- + Intersect planning best practice with an equity lens

# History of Zoning

- + Organize land uses
- + Minimize conflicts
- + Exclusionary of certain segments of the population
- + Impacted and resulted in displacement of many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people



*Edmonton's 1933 Zoning Map*

# A Zoning Bylaw for Everyone: GBA+ and Equity Toolkit



A **tool** to provide guidance to the Zoning Bylaw Team (and others) on how best to consider concepts of equity and diversity while drafting regulations



An **opportunity** to offset the disproportionate impacts felt by certain segments of the population



An **opportunity** for introspection and consideration of privilege and equity in the work that Edmonton's administration undertakes

# How we are measuring success

## Sample Measures:

- + Decrease in the number of rezonings
- + Reduction in direct control zoning
- + Gradual decrease in variance requests over time
- + Reduction in development permit timelines over time
- + The number of development permit appeals decreases
- + Increased housing supply and variety in developing and redeveloping areas

# Thank you!

For more info visit  
[edmonton.ca/\*\*ZoningBylawRenewal\*\*](https://edmonton.ca/ZoningBylawRenewal)

The logo for the City of Edmonton, featuring the word "Edmonton" in white text on a dark blue rectangular background. The background of the slide also features a decorative pattern of light blue and white 3D cubes on the right side.

Edmonton





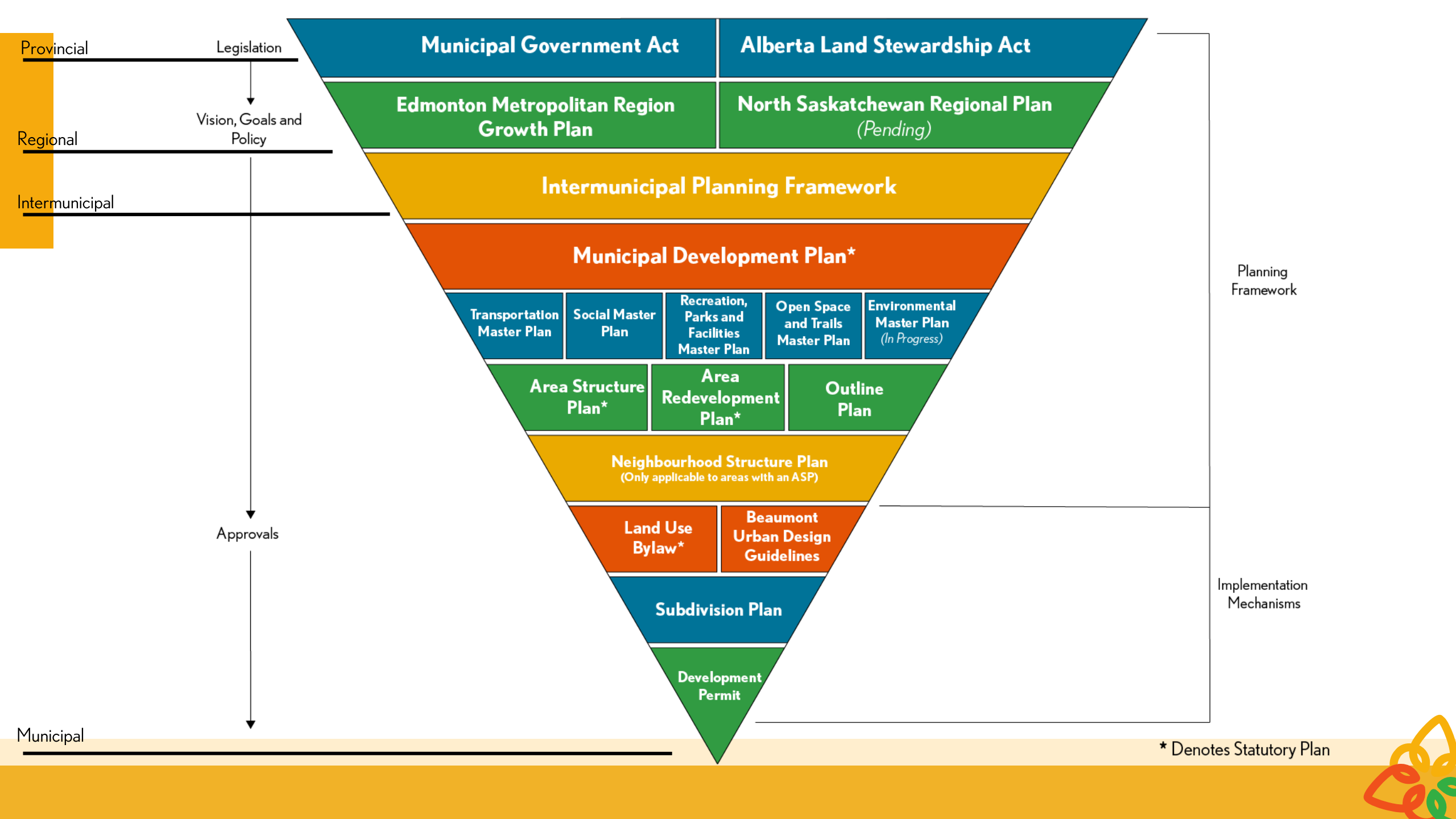
**BUILDING A COMPLETE  
COMMUNITY**

**BEAUMONT'S EXPERIENCE**



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 Sa Majesté la Reine du chef du Canada, Ressources naturelles Canada.

USA / É-U d'A



Provincial | Legislation

Regional | Vision, Goals and Policy

Intermunicipal

Municipal

Municipal Government Act

Alberta Land Stewardship Act

Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan

North Saskatchewan Regional Plan (Pending)

Intermunicipal Planning Framework

Municipal Development Plan\*

Transportation Master Plan

Social Master Plan

Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan

Open Space and Trails Master Plan

Environmental Master Plan (In Progress)

Area Structure Plan\*

Area Redevelopment Plan\*

Outline Plan

Neighbourhood Structure Plan (Only applicable to areas with an ASP)

Land Use Bylaw\*

Beaumont Urban Design Guidelines

Subdivision Plan

Development Permit

Planning Framework

Implementation Mechanisms

\* Denotes Statutory Plan



# MOVE TOWARDS COMPLETE COMMUNITIES



## Healthy Vibrant Community

Important policy elements that together create an attractive, desirable community that provides a high quality of life for residents of all ages, which include arts and culture, placemaking, history, and social equity.

## Responsible Development

Policies guiding future development of lands in Beaumont.

## Effective Movement of People and Goods

Policies related to the transportation system with a focus on safe, inclusive, and multi-modal options for residents and businesses.

## Environmental Stewardship

Policies that ensure the protection and expansion of Beaumont's environment to ensure future generations can enjoy Beaumont's resources.

## Economic Strength

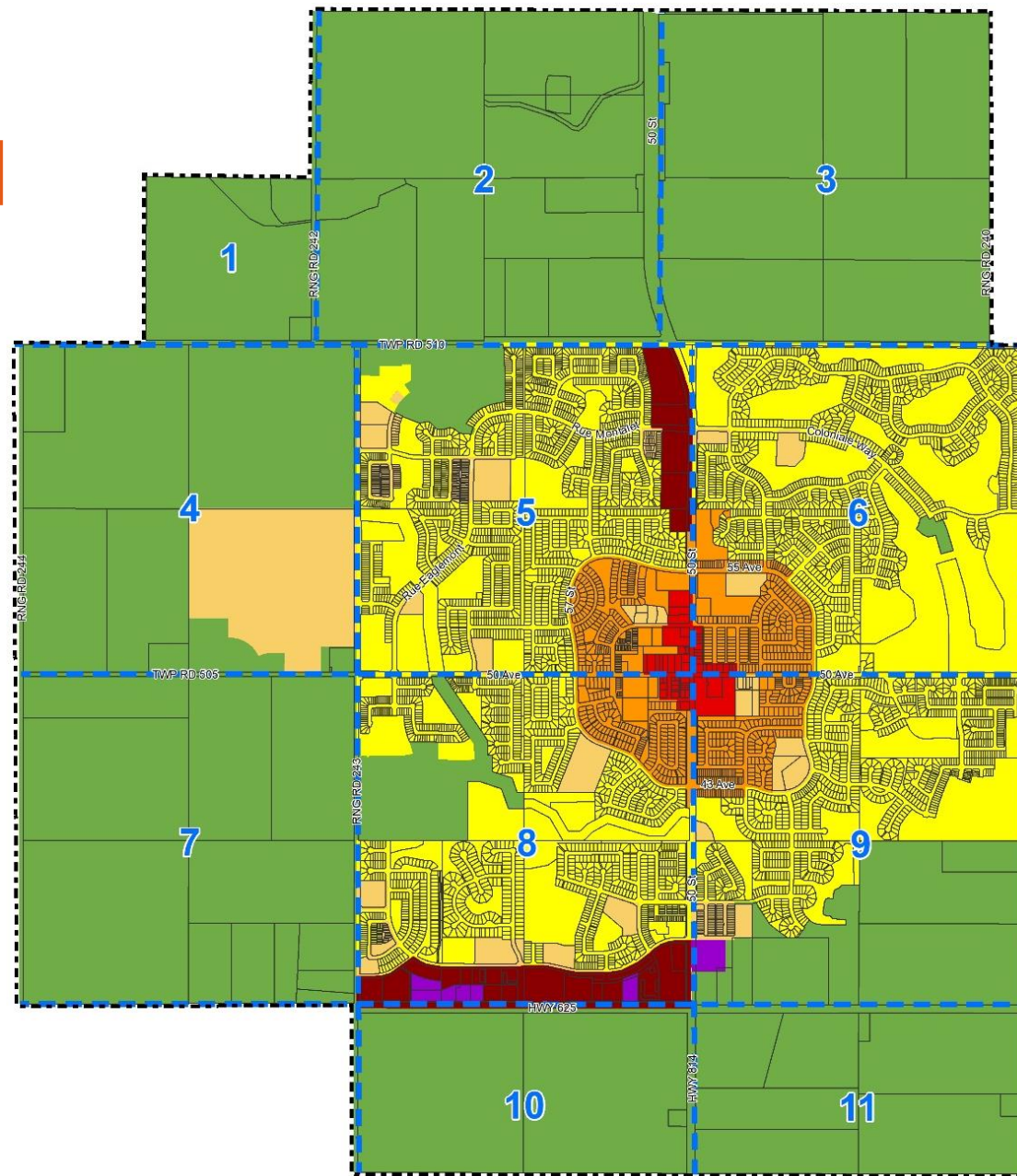
Key components for successful growth and attracting diverse and innovative local employment opportunities.

## Safety and Emergency Management

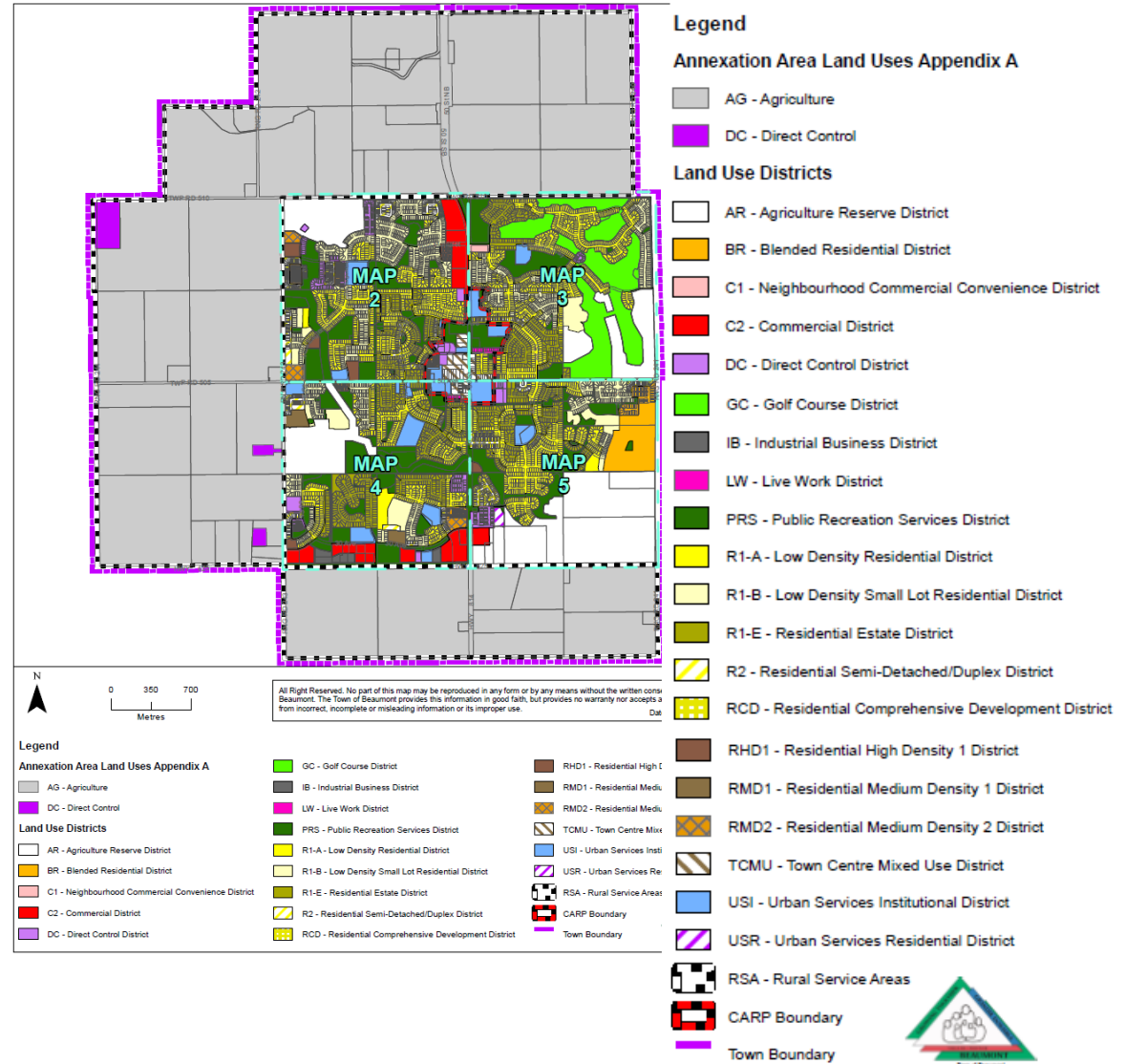
Safety and Emergency Management is included in the plan to ensure the safety, health, and welfare of Beaumont's residents.

# NEW APPROACH

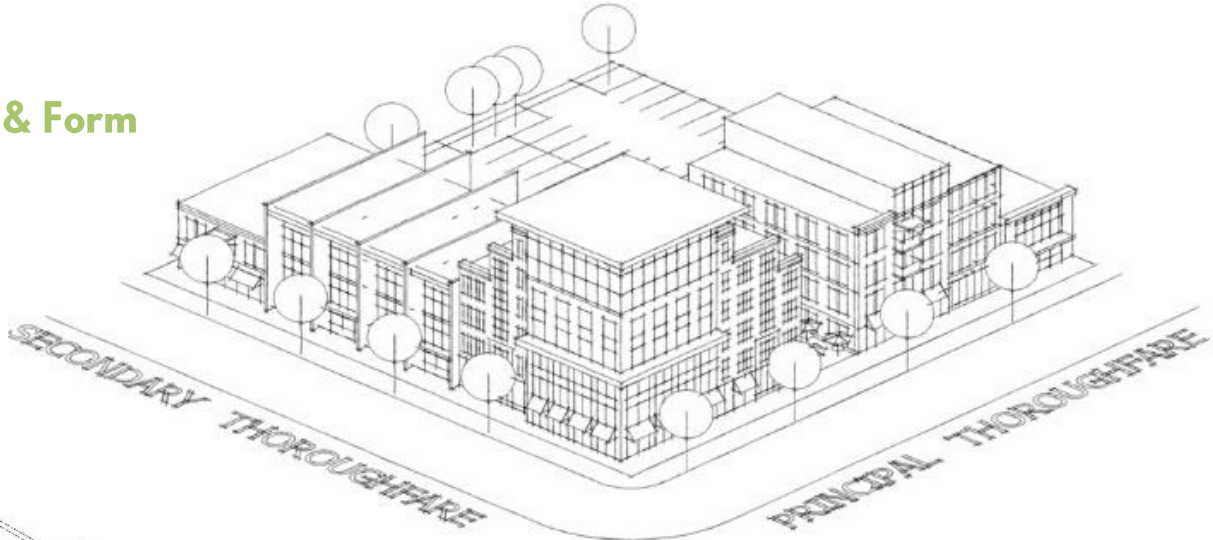
-  Agricultural Holdings District (AH)
-  Conventional Neighbourhood District (CN)
-  Integrated Neighbourhood District (IN)
-  Mature Neighbourhood District (MN)
-  Main Street District (MS)
-  Commercial District (C)
-  Business Light Industrial District (BLI)
-  Municipal Boundary



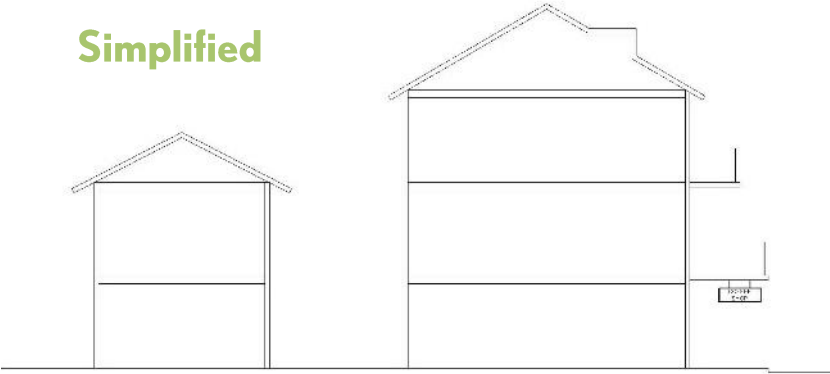
# TOWARDS SIMPLIFICATION



**Density & Form**



**Simplified**



**Clear Standards & Processes**



# WHAT WE HEARD



- Housing variety and affordability
- Changes to setbacks for site flexibility
- Small town feel
- Integration of non-residential uses
- Importance of trees and landscaping
- Options for parking and design standards
- Simplified application process
- Concerns with subdivision standards
- Local context accommodating change over time



# LAND USE REGULATION

## Traditional

- Strictly segregates land uses
- Prescriptive
- Problematic regulations

## New Approaches

- Faster and less costly
- Social inclusion and equality
- Reinvestment and renewal
- Efficiencies and conservation
- Human health and well-being

Photo credit: Town of Peace River



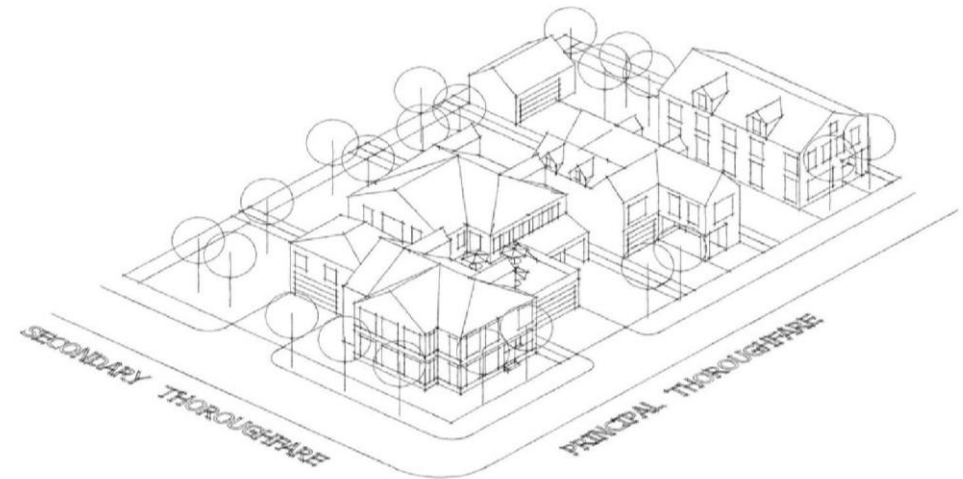
# UNIQUE AND INNOVATIVE

- Flexible and simplified
- Inclusive and provides choice
- Builds complete neighbourhoods
- Adaptable

## PART 3: LAND USE DISTRICTS

### CONVENTIONAL NEIGHBOURHOOD DISTRICT (CN)

#### 3.3 CONVENTIONAL NEIGHBOURHOOD DISTRICT (CN)



# CHOICE

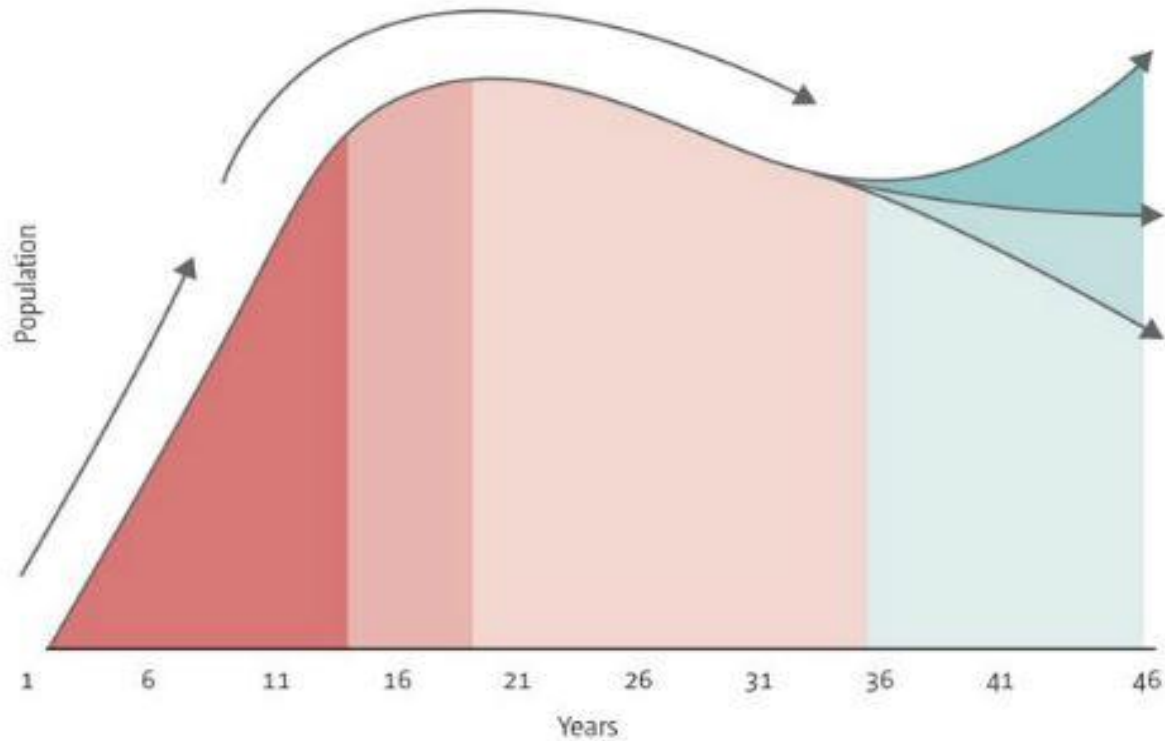
- Different housing types
- Affordability
- Distributed density
- Small town feel



# ADAPTIVE

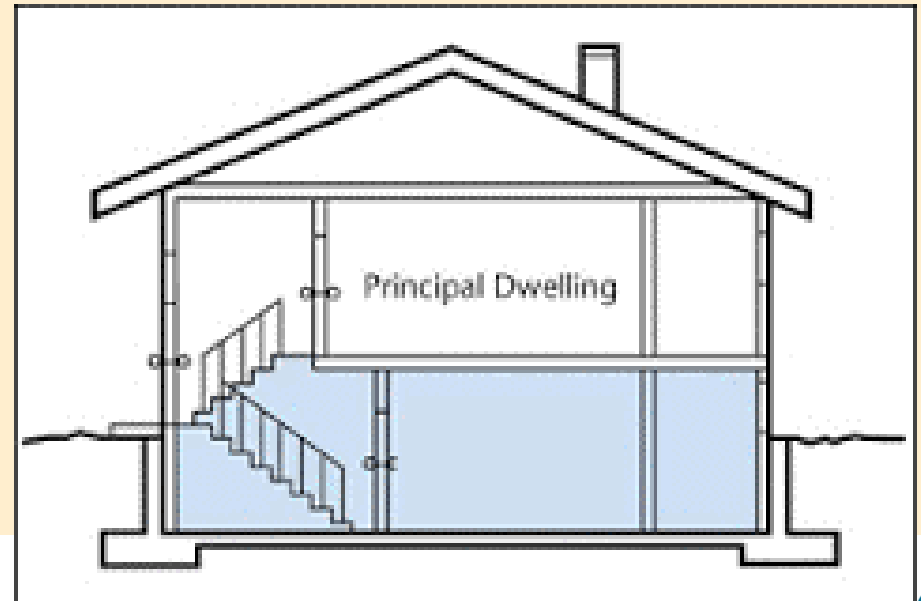
- Resilience and inclusive
- Economic growth and entrepreneurial
- Natural cycles of growth and change
- Remain relevant and attainable
- Commercial uses grow
- Innovation

The Typical Lifecycle of a Neighbourhood



- Development of vacant lands results in population increase, typically young families with young children.
- Neighbourhoods are completed and in-migration slows. The population continues to grow as families have children.
- The population declines as children grow up and leave home.
- Neighbourhoods may be revitalized, or become seen as a desirable place to live. Redevelopment and intensification increase available dwellings and attract new residents.
- New in-migration from young families occurs as older couples begin to leave the neighbourhood. A stable neighbourhood population is achieved.
- Undesirable economic and social conditions may make neighbourhoods unattractive, resulting in population losses.

# TRENDS: UNIQUE HOUSING TYPES



# TRENDS: DIVERSITY OF FRONTAGE STANDARDS



# TRENDS: SMALL-SCALE COMMERCIAL



# TRENDS: SMALL-SCALE COMMERCIAL





**There's only two things I don't like:**

**LIMITATIONS AND  
LESSONS LEARNED**

**Change and the way things are.**





**THANK-YOU!**