



March 26, 2024

Ministry of Environment and Protected Areas  
#204 Legislature Building  
10800 – 97 Avenue NW  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

## **RE: Rocky View County Response Letter - Draft Springbank Off-stream Reservoir (SR1) Land Use Plan**

Rocky View County appreciates the opportunity to submit the following response letter for the draft Springbank Off-stream Reservoir (SR1) Land Use Plan. The County's position has been informed by a full internal review of the draft SR1 Land Use Plan, as well as feedback gathered from local landowners, residents, and community groups.

Rocky View County conducted an online survey to validate and seek additional feedback from the public on areas of concern, which were first identified by our Administration and County-based Joint Land Use Advisory Committee members. A total of 75 respondents completed the online survey. The County's complete engagement summary report for the survey, and response letters from the County-based Joint Land Use Advisory Committee members has been included as Attachment A.

Rocky View County's areas of concern within and around the draft SR1 Land Use Plan are primarily based around (A) public access and (B) operations. Below is a high-level overview of each area of concern, as well as the percentage of the County's survey responses who agreed with each statement:

### **A. Public Access Concerns**

1. The SR1 Land Use Plan needs clearer policies allowing for the greatest amount of safe public access, especially across the pathway on the dam structure (i.e. berm) during low-risk flood periods. Policy 3.2 needs to clarify public access to the dam structure pathways during the following closure scenarios in:
  - a. Policy 3.3.2 – Annual Flood Season (May 1 - July 31) when forecasts are low-risk (e.g. snowpack, upstream water levels, etc.).
  - b. Policy 3.3.4 – Reclamation Post Flood (minimum of two years post flood) when public access does not interfere with land reclamation.

*89% of respondents agreed with this statement.*

2. Although outside of SR1 Lands, the Province needs to provide more clarity on the road and pathway connections into SR1, specifically:
  - a. North connection into SR1, which ideally would be off Range Road 35.
  - b. Safe active transportation corridor from the southwest pathway connection across Highway 22 and connecting toward Bragg Creek.
  - c. Parking location and design details that provide community access without creating a major tourist destination.

*92% of respondents agreed with this statement.*

3. Although outside of SR1 Lands, clarification is needed from the Province on their plans for the 'South Lands' and Kamp Kiwanis Lands. Rocky View County advocates for the Joint Land Use Advisory Committee's:
  - a. Recommendation #8 – to retain the “South Lands” as Public Crown Lands, which would provide the community with public access to the Elbow River.
  - b. Recommendation #10 – to retain the Kamp Kiwanis Lands as Crown lands due to their environmental value and exploring opportunities for regional active transportation networks, and public infrastructure such as parking lots, staging areas, camping, and other public access.

*95% of respondents agreed with the South Lands recommendation, and 88% of respondents agreed with the Kamp Kiwanis recommendation statements.*

#### **B. Operation Concerns**

4. The SR1 Land Use Plan should explore seasonal grazing permits as the primary method for vegetation control for Policy 5.4.2, which currently prefers mowing and haying over livestock grazing for the management of vegetation.

*88% of respondents agreed with this statement.*

5. Rocky View County should be consulted in the development of the SR1 Operations Plan.

*99% of respondents agreed with this statement.*

6. Rocky View County should be included in the ongoing monitoring and adaptive management process for SR1. Furthermore, the County should have the ability to bring forward concerns arising from the County's Administration, residents, and landowners.

*97% of respondents agreed with this statement.*

Rocky View County's engagement survey also received numerous comments expressing concern for:

- Public safety with hunting permitted in SR1, especially with high-powered firearms permitted through treaty rights.
- The lack of policy support for horseback riding in the dry reservoir area.
- Environmental impacts resulting from public access and the SR1 operations.

Rocky View County hopes this feedback helps inform the SR1 Land Use Plan, the SR1 Operations Plan, as well as the Government of Alberta's future plans for lands around the SR1 project. The County looks forward to the final version of the SR1 Land Use Plan, and our staff are available for further collaboration and coordination on the SR1 project.

Sincerely,

Byron Riemann  
Executive Director of Operations Division



# **Draft Springbank Off-stream Reservoir (SR1) Land Use Plan:**

## **Response Letter**

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## **Engagement Summary Report**

**March 26, 2024**

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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Springbank Off-stream Reservoir (SR1) is a provincial flood mitigation project located within Rocky View County, approximately 15 kilometres west of Calgary, at the junction of Highway 22 and Springbank Road. The project lands cover an area of approximately 1,566 hectares (3,870 acres). SR1 is currently under construction, and the project's completion is scheduled for 2025.

During flood events, the SR1 diversion infrastructure will divert Elbow River floodwater flows through the diversion channel into the dry reservoir and the earthen dam structure will hold the water. The dry reservoir will only contain water during flood emergencies. After the floodwater flows decrease, a gated outlet will control the release of the floodwaters back to the Elbow River, connecting through an existing unnamed creek channel.

As part of the SR1 project, the Government of Alberta (the Province) is in the process of developing a SR1 Land Use Plan, which describes a variety of access scenarios, suitable land uses, and related policy direction. The land use plan will apply to the dry reservoir, diversion infrastructure, diversion channel and dam structure. The SR1 Land Use Plan is scheduled to be finalized in spring of 2024.

One of the conditions attached to the approval of the SR1 project was the requirement that when the project lands are not being used for flood mitigation or operational activities, First Nations will have priority access for the exercise of treaty rights and traditional uses. Public access and other uses, such as non-motorized recreational activities, will also be permitted.

### Rocky View County's Participation

On July 26, 2022, Council directed Administration to participate in the SR1 Land Use Plan project in two distinct capacities:

1. As an invited member of the Joint Land Use Advisory Committee (Apr. 2022 - Jan. 2023); and,
2. As an independent reviewer of the draft SR1 Land Use Plan (Feb. 2024 - Mar. 2024).

In January 2023, the Joint Land Use Advisory Committee successfully submitted the Springbank Off-stream Reservoir: Land Use Plan Recommendations Report to the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas (EPA). The report highlighted seventeen (17) recommendations centered around four (4) major themes:

- Water Management
- Ecological Values
- Vision for Recreation Management, Public Access, and Human Connectivity
- Natural and Cultural History and Public Education

Administration fulfilled its responsibilities as a member of the Advisory Committee and awaited the release of the draft SR1 Land Use Plan, which was released by the Province on February 12, 2024. The public was given 30 days (March 17, 2024) to provide their feedback through the Province's online survey, and Rocky View County was given until March 29, 2024, to provide a Response Letter.

## WHAT WE DID

Rocky View County conducted a full internal review of the draft Springbank Off-stream Reservoir (SR1) Land Use Plan and identified several areas of concern. Administration then met with the County-based Joint Land Use Advisory Committee members, which consisted of local landowners, as well as representatives from the Springbank Community Association (SCA), Springbank Community Planning Association (SCPA), and Springbank Trails and Pathways Association (STAPA). At the meeting, Administration reviewed the draft SR1 Land Use Plan and discussed the County's areas of concern.

Based on these initial areas of concern, Administration launched an online survey to validate and seek additional feedback from the public. The County's online survey was open from March 1<sup>st</sup> to March 14<sup>th</sup> at midnight. The online survey received a total of 75 responses.

In addition, Administration held two in-person coffee chats at the Springbank Park for All Seasons facility on March 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. At these coffee chats, residents and interested parties were able to review physical copies of the draft SR1 Land Use Plan, and then using County provided tablets, they could provide their feedback through both the County's and Province's online surveys. The coffee chats had approximately 45 attendees.

To ensure the public was also completing the Province's online survey before the March 18<sup>th</sup> deadline, the County's survey also included a direct link to the Province's survey website. Furthermore, the County's first survey question asked:

***“Have you completed the Province's SR1 online engagement survey?”***

- 64% of respondents confirmed they had completed the Province's survey, while 36% of respondents had not completed the Province's survey.



## WHO WE HEARD FROM

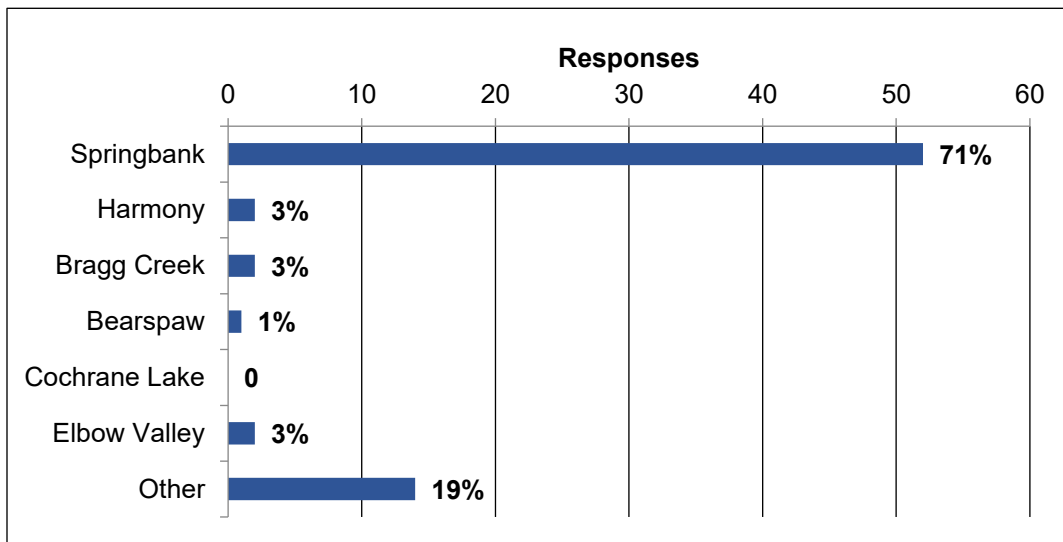
To determine where our respondents lived, the County's SR1 engagement survey included two qualifying questions:

### 1. "Do you live or own land within Rocky View County?"

90% of respondents lived within Rocky View County, while 10% of respondents lived outside of Rocky View County.

### 2. "Which community do you live in? If your community is not listed below, then please use the 'other' selection to type in your Rocky View County Community or neighbouring municipality name."

Over 70% of respondents were from the Springbank community.



#### Other:

Rural Rocky View County	3
Calgary	5
Pirmez Creek	2
Coach Hill	1
Cochrane	1
Foothills County	1
Jumping Pound	1

## WHAT WE HEARD

Respondents were asked to review the seven (7) area of concern statements below (in **bold**) and select their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Finally, respondents were able to share any concerns that were not captured in the areas of concern already identified in the survey.

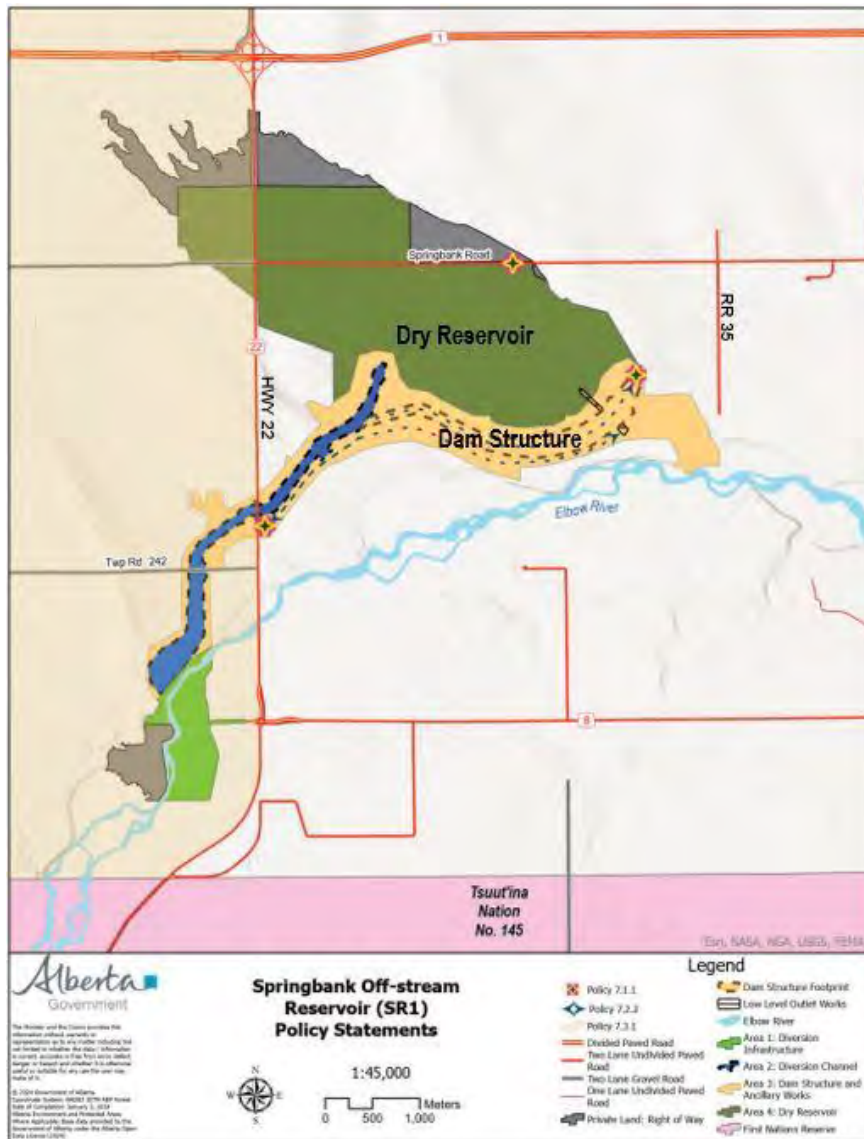
Below are the survey statements and corresponding results:

- The draft SR1 Land Use Plan needs clearer policies allowing for the greatest amount of safe public access, especially across the pathway on the dam structure (i.e. berm) during low-risk flood periods (see Figure 1).**

Furthermore, the SR1 Land Use Plan needs to clarify public access to the dam structure pathways during the following closure scenarios (Policy 3.2):

- Annual flood season (May 1 - July 31) when forecasts (snowpack, upstream water levels, etc.) are low-risk.
- Reclamation post flood (two years) when public access does not interfere with land reclamation.

Figure 1: SR1 Location Map



**Results: 89% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.**

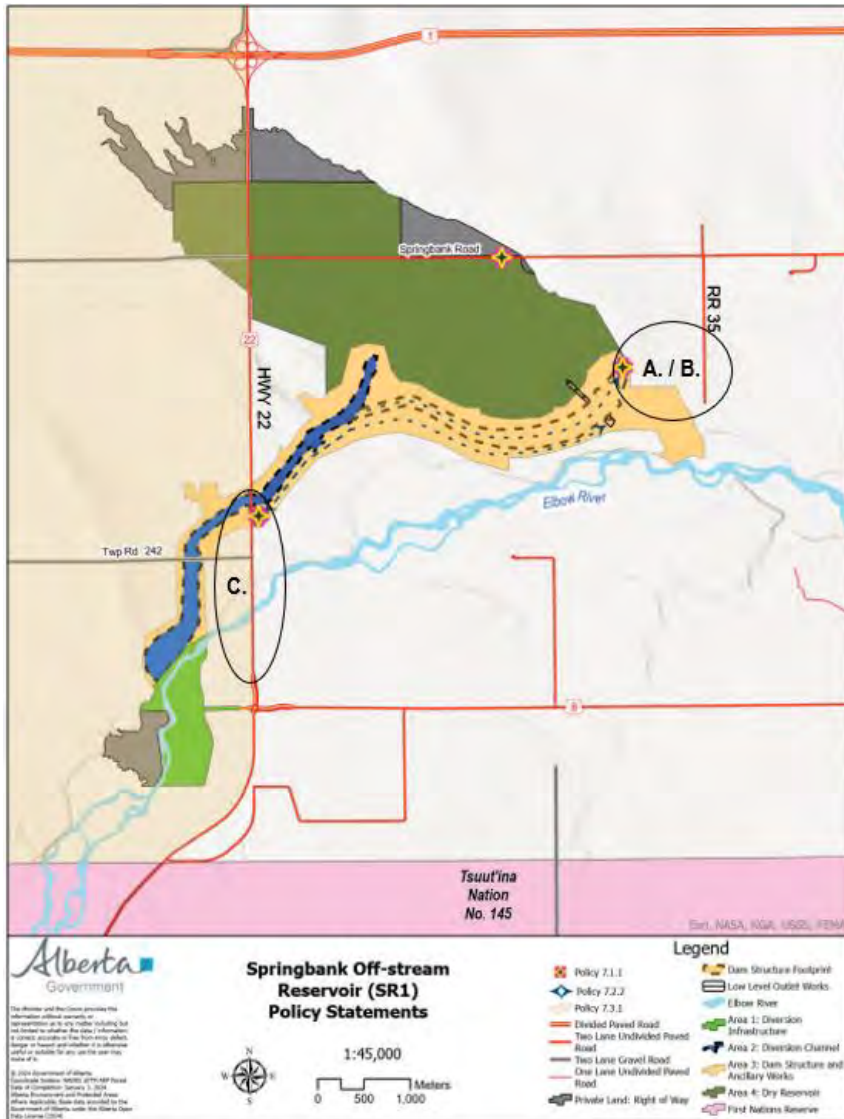
Strongly agree	39	89%
Agree	20	
Neither agree nor disagree	3	5%
Disagree	0	6%
Strongly disagree	4	



**2. Although outside of SR1 Lands, the Province needs to provide more clarity on the road and pathway connections into the SR1, specifically (see Figure 2):**

- A. North connection into SR1 (i.e. ideally Range Road 35).**
- B. Parking location and design details that provide community access without creating a major tourist destination.**
- C. Safe active transportation corridor from the southwest pathway connection across HWY22 and connecting toward Bragg Creek.**

Figure 2: SR1 Road and Pathway Connections



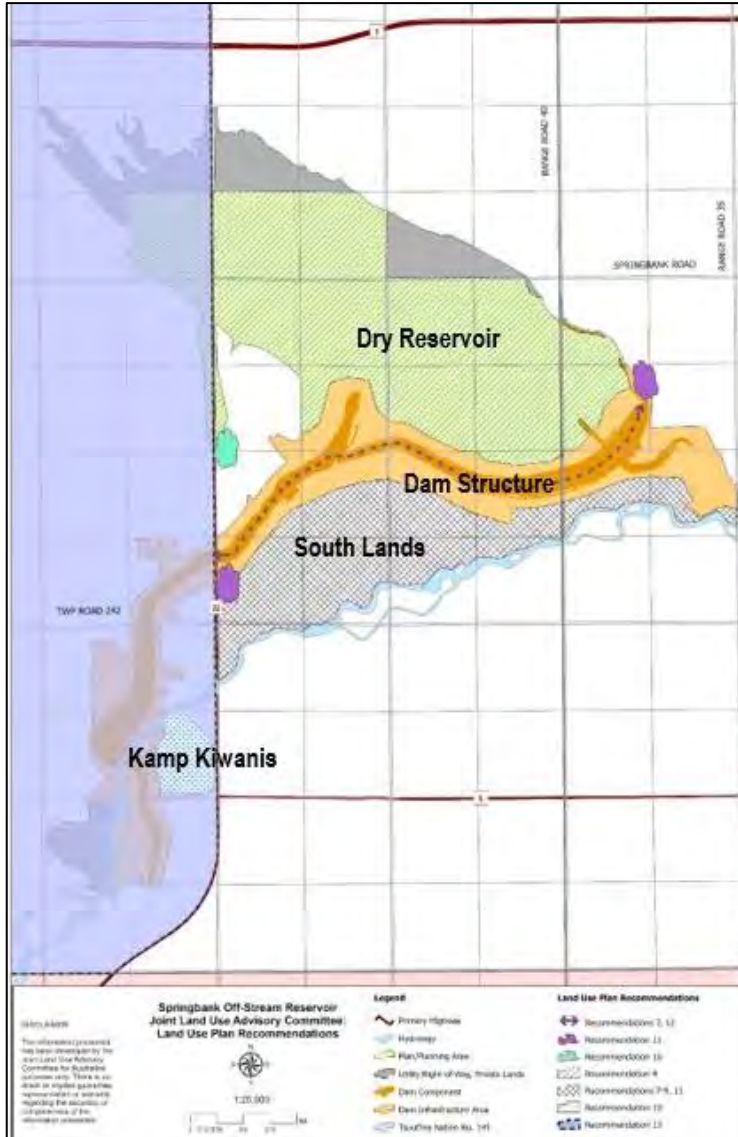
**Results: 92% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.**

Strongly agree	44	92%
Agree	17	
Neither agree nor disagree	2	3%
Disagree	0	5%
Strongly disagree	3	

3. A key recommendation of the Joint Land Use Advisory Committee was retaining the “South Lands” (see Figure 3) as Public Crown Lands, which would provide the community with public access to the Elbow River.

**Although outside of SR1 Lands, clarification is needed from the Province on their future plans for the South Lands.**

Figure 3: Joint Land Use Advisory Committee Recommendations Map



**Results: 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.**

Strongly agree	47	95%
Agree	15	
Neither agree nor disagree	2	3%
Disagree	0	2%
Strongly disagree	1	

4. The Joint Land Use Advisory Committee also recommended retaining the Kamp Kiwanis Lands (see Figure 3 above) as Crown lands due to their environmental value and wanted to explore opportunities for regional active transportation networks, and public infrastructure such as parking lots, staging areas, camping, and other public access.

**Although outside the SR1 lands, clarification is needed from the Province on their future plans for the Kamp Kiwanis Lands.**

**Results: 88% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.**

Strongly agree	45	88%
Agree	11	
Neither agree nor disagree	6	9%
Disagree	1	3%
Strongly disagree	1	

5. The draft SR1 Land Use Plan provides direction on vegetation management, however the County has concerns related to Policy 5.4.2, which prefers mowing and haying over livestock grazing for the management of vegetation. **The Province should explore temporary seasonal grazing leases as the primary method for vegetation control.**

**Results: 88% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.**

Strongly agree	42	88%
Agree	17	
Neither agree nor disagree	2	3%
Disagree	4	9%
Strongly disagree	2	



6. The draft SR1 Land Use Plan creates potential concerns related to the operations, enforcement, and emergency response in and around the SR1 Lands. The County is aware an Operations Plan is being developed by the Province, but **Rocky View County should be consulted in the development of the SR1 Operations Plan.**

**Results: 99% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.**

Strongly agree	50	99%
Agree	16	
Neither agree nor disagree	1	1%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly disagree	0	

**7. Rocky View County should be included in the ongoing monitoring and adaptive management process for SR1, and as a participant the County should have the ability to bring forward concerns arising from County Administration, residents, and landowners.**

**Results: 97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.**

Strongly agree	53	97%
Agree	12	
Neither agree nor disagree	1	1%
Disagree	0	1%
Strongly disagree	1	

**8. Do you have any concerns relating to the draft SR1 Land Use Plan that would not be included in the areas of concern listed above? Please provide any additional areas of concern or comments that you would like to be considered in the County's Independent Reviewer Letter to the Province.**

Thirty-seven (37) comments were received for the final survey question: "Do you have any concerns relating to the draft SR1 Land Use Plan that would not be included in the areas of concern listed above?". Of these comments, the most common areas of concerns not already listed in the survey were:

- a. Public safety with hunting permitted in SR1, especially with high-powered firearms permitted through treaty rights.
- b. The lack of policy support for horseback riding in the dry reservoir area.
- c. Environmental impacts resulting from public access and the SR1 operations.

Appendix A includes all the comments received for this question.

## HOW WILL YOUR INPUT BE USED & NEXT STEPS

Rocky View County Administration will use this information to inform the County's Response Letter to the Province. This engagement summary report will be appended to the Response Letter to ensure the Province has received all the public's comments from our survey. In addition, Appendix B includes response letters from County-based Joint Land Use Advisory Committee members.

The Rocky View County Response Letter and engagement summary report will be presented to Council on Tuesday, March 26, 2024, prior to submitting the Response Letter to the Province by March 29, 2024.

## APPENDIX A – OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

Below are the direct comments received for the question:

“Do you have any concerns relating to the draft SR1 Land Use Plan that would not be included in the areas of concern listed above? Please provide any additional areas of concern or comments that you would like to be considered in the County's Independent Reviewer Letter to the Province.”

#	COMMENTS
1	I am extremely concerned that the potential recreation activities listed in the plan fail to include equestrian use and thus trailhead parking that accommodates that use!
2	Primary access to the dam lands for recreational use needs to ONLY be off highway 22. Range road 35 should be kept as a small rural road, furthermore the county does not need the added cost to maintain 35 if it has the increased traffic as a tourist destination.
3	Wildfire control is critical. Remember Fort McMurray and Hawaii. No public access and Grazing is the only successful method that we have used for over 100 years. Any access should be off Hwy 22 RR35 is not build to accept any volume of traffic No access off Springbank Rd.
4	Assure no access from Springbank Road. Any access should be off Hwy 22 (RR 35 is not an acceptable option
5	Land should be used for recreational uses very similar to how the recreational land is used in West Bragg Creek, so for hiking, dog walking, biking, horseback pleasure riding, and cross country skiing and showshoeing, walking in the winter. Hunting should not be allowed. Wildlife should be free and safe to consider this land their home.
6	I am very concerned about the possibility of hunting being one of the activities that is sanctioned on these lands. I am very much opposed to that.
7	Would like to use the land for horse back riding in non flood periods
8	I want ALL people to have access to the land with equal opportunity. I do not want hunting permitted in this area. It is not safe for residents and livestock that border this area. I have a special interest in access for equine trail riding and would hope this would be allowed.
9	I ride one of the horses at efr and I volunteered to do this survey for my teens class efr. There is 20ish kids about in my class I am 14. We ride on property and its alot of fun but we really like going to kananaksis and the mountains but gas is expensive and the trailers for the horses use alot of gas. Teens class and probably alot of other kids would like to ride on the dam lands when they arent filled with water because they are right next door to us and we wouldnt need trailers or it would just be a short drive. The horses really would like it to. And it would be god for the environment because the trailers produce co2 and this would be co2 free. Also I think teens riding horses is very good for them and then less teens in trouble. thanks
10	First Nations priority access to lands purchased using Alberta taxpayer funds from Private landholders...NOT FIRST NATIONS. First Nations hunting on SR1 lands, no hunting should be permitted on SR1 Lands and Alberta residents should have access to the SR1 lands without fear of hunters of any type. Multi use should be encouraged on the SR1 lands when no danger of flooding exists, including mountain biking, and equestrian and skiing and snowshoeing in the winter months. Take some pressure off of the west Bragg Creek trail system. These lands belong to the people of Alberta and no interest group or otherwise should have priority to the SR1 lands!

11	Biggest risk to nearby residents is wildfire. Proper management of the natural prairie grasses is critical. Grazing is the best and most natural way to do this. Make a plan that balances the access for First Nations and the public with a grazing plan that makes the area safe.
12	No
13	As a resident landowner, and neighbour to the SR1 project, we feel completely in the dark in terms of what the province is planning. They have left us out as a stakeholder in their communications. There needs to be a fulsome communications strategy with regard to crisis management and safety planning with this structure. What is the priority callout procedure when an emergency occurs? Who is going to monitor public access to this area, should it be provided? What about wildlife management and environmental concerns? This is a sensitive wetland area that should be maintained as such. The original RVC landowners should be given first right of refusal to have access to their lands for grazing and agricultural use. We are also extremely concerned with the province's intentions with the Kamp Kiwanis lands. Should this be turned into a public access area, we have HUGE concerns with garbage disposal and fire management. We have seen an increase in garbage in our ditches and on our property since the commencement of SR1. Please support the taxpayers in this area who have to live with this monstrosity.
14	There needs to be a walking pathway through SR1 and public river access. Public access will also require adequate parking for those wanting to enjoy the river. For reference Clearwater Park on Range Road 25 has an INADEQUATE sized parking lot for the amount of people wanting to use it and there is no other parking anywhere near the area. This pushes people to park on the side of highway 8 which is not a good solution. People from RV and all around should be able to enjoy the FREE nature around them. As a RV resident I want to be able to walk on dedicated paths and enjoy my "community".
15	Due to extreme danger to residents and passing motorists the use of firearms should be strictly prohibited. The most proficient method of fire suppression is livestock grazing.
16	What if the SR1 project fails to control flooding along the Elbow river in Rockyview County? Mother Nature will have the last word.
17	I am concerned about the risk created by the permission to hunt along with public walking/hiking/cycling access. This appears to me to be tragedy waiting to happen
18	I would like to see multi recreational use including horse trails but no motorized vehicles of any type.
19	Connected pathways adjacent to roadways would be an asset.
20	Do not allow the land to become a Provincial Park overcome with tourists or visitors.
21	The draft plan clearly identifies a 'hierarchy' of access and use for the project lands - first to fulfill the primary intent of flood mitigation and safety, then to provide First Nations with 'priority' and finally to provide public access and use. This is clear. However, within this structure, there appears to be continued ambiguity concerning: 1. what First Nations priority use will look like. Fueled by the 'priority' nature of FN's access and use, current rumours suggest there will be no regulation at all of FN use and access of the project lands. Even if this is a matter of Canadian law (e.g. the scope of treaty rights and 'traditional uses') and not necessarily within the control of AEP, it would be helpful to include some information on First Nations' access and use in the plan - even if this information is self contained in a sidebar or appendix. For example, it might help alleviate some concerns to know how First Nations and non-First Nations' hunting rights co-exist on other occupied public lands? 2. With respect to the scope of 'public use', the draft plan clearly specifies what activities will not be permitted and where activities will not be permitted. However, the draft plan is

	<p>less successful conveying (a) a list of what will be permitted; or (b) providing a set of factors or criteria which will be used by AEP to determine whether a proposed activity would (or would not) be permitted on the project lands. For example, the plan mentions that hiking and biking might be permitted. If I wanted to propose 'high speed cycling' (currently conducted on roadways between Calgary and neighbouring communities), how would AEP decide if this was permitted? What factors or criteria would they look at? There is some suggestion in the plan that this type of biking would be permitted as the plan mentions one of the goals of allowing bikes on the project lands is to get them off local highways. The only bikes on local highways are high speed road bikes. If planners are envisioning the bike paths of the project lands to be low speed, multi-use paths for families and walkers - there will likely come a time when an assessment will need to be made over whether 'high speed road biking' is permitted on the project lands. A coherent set of factors or criteria to apply to suggested land uses could also be applied to other 'non-motorized recreational activities' not mentioned by name in the draft plan. (This is a separate point of ambiguity .). For example horseback riding - trail riding is a named 'non-motorized recreational activity' in GoA publications (along with hiking and biking). Horseback riding has particular significance to the project lands. You can't drive down Springbank road without seeing horses pasturing on the lands and horse facilities for sheltering and feeding horses. Two stables and boarding facilities have signs prominently displayed off Springbank Road. If you turn left onto highway 22 at the west end of Springbank Road, you immediately come across 2 more equestrian facilities. If you turn right at this same intersection and travel down highway 22, just over Highway 1, you pass another equestrian facility and the Burwash facilities - a veterinary complex solely dedicated to horse care. It is thriving, evidencing the strong local horse community.</p> <p>3. What locations will be available for public access and use are also unclear in the Plan. One of the policy directives appears to endorse a path for public access near or along the maintenance road. The plan is unclear if this is the only location where public access is envisioned at this time. If this is the case - and I would strongly object to this - the plan needs to be clear.</p> <p>4. Finally, the Rockyview survey (above) lists 2 areas of land outside of the 'Project Lands' where it has been suggested that AEP should disclose its plans for the land. I would propose that the AEP should a) disclose all of the land the GoA acquired for the purpose of the Springbank Off-stream Reservoir project (and therefore is under the authorization of and perhaps subject to NRCB and other approvals); and b) disclose its plans for each of those lands. The GoA purchased those lands, representing to both the public and private landowners that they were necessary for the project's completion. The GoA cannot, in good faith, now omit these lands from the 'project lands' (and the plan) and claim they have no further connection to the project and not subject to public inquiry. (Apologies Rockyview - this was hastily put together directly into the survey query. My comments are a bit disorganized and likely suffer from the same ambiguity that I am criticizing the draft plan for. Nonetheless, thank you for reaching out into the community looking for feedback.)</p>
22	This feels like rail roading , and I strongly disagree with the SR1 projects delivery. It should have been located west.
23	We have concerns with the possibility of firearm usage on the SR1 Lands. We live in the community and are concerned with the safety of our family.
24	No hunting due to safety concerns. Large herd of elk live in this area - hunting them would negatively impact the herd.
25	Concerns around hunting - safety issues for public use. No hunting, too small of an area. Too many incompatible uses for hunting.

26	Consequences of involvement in SR1 operations and the resource required by the County.
27	Provide more details and definition about what hunting criteria is for Indigenous treaty rights on this Occupied Crown Land. For example, high powered firearms. I am concerned that firearm hunting would pose a safety risk to other users of the space. I agree that public safety is the number one priority.
28	<p>1. The South lands have great potential to provide diverse benefits for the local and downstream communities, e.g., drinking water quality; healthy aquatic life; conservation of riverine habitats for wildlife, native plants and healthy river; environmental education (water, climate change, flooding, drought), as well as public access (with restrictions). Kamp Kiwanis lands and amenities can also provide local benefits for recreational activities, e.g., pathways, parking lot as well as existing access and roads. The South lands are critical for the health of the environment. They contain ephemeral wetlands that protect the water quality of the Elbow River.</p> <p>2. There should be NO guns and preferably no hunting inside the areas of public access. Not a compatible activity.</p> <p>3. There should be NO dogs/pets inside the areas of public access - there is a dog park in Springbank already. Don't turn these public lands into a dog park!</p> <p>4. There should be a priority on conserving wildlife habitat and native vegetation, for the benefit of the Elbow River and the local community.</p>
29	Airborne contaminates post flood from the dry reservoir, especially given three schools and residents in the area.
30	Too many people Too many dogs Creating tourist area in rural community Access to parking Garbage/ Safety Firearms and Weapons - Indigenous or other
31	I am concerned how granting the First Nations ongoing hunting rights will work while still ensuring safety for general public recreational users. This was covered above, but how people will access these lands needs to be much clearer - where do people leave cars, etc. Having the south lands and Camp Kiwanis for general public use needs to be strongly emphasized.
32	Access from township road 245 needs to be addressed and nearby residences.
33	All hunting if allowed by all participants including First Nations should follow WMU 212 rules for reasons of safety.
34	There must never be camping on any of the public lands. The land is often an ephemeral wetland, therefore sensitive and all such activities will impact the water quality of the Elbow River.
35	There has to be more details. There has to be direct input from Springbank residents.
36	The first two questions in this survey were at odds with each other. On one hand there is a promotion of greatest public access and on the other there is a concern for creating a tourist destination. I believe there is the potential for thousands of people being drawn to a post-construction SR1 site and Springbank will bear the brunt of traffic, cyclists, garbage, lack of enforcement, etc.
37	Limiting access to Rockyview residents



## **APPENDIX B – COUNTY-BASED COMMITTEE MEMBER RESPONSE LETTERS**



Springbank Trails and Pathways Association (STAPA)

24271 Westbluff Drive

Calgary AB T3Z 3N9

[www.springbankpathways.ca](http://www.springbankpathways.ca)

March 12, 2024

**SR1 Land Use Planning Team**

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas

Lands Division, Lands Planning Branch

Attention: Chad Willms

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss and provide comments on the Draft Land Use Plan for the Springbank Off-Stream Reservoir Project (SR1).

STAPA and Springbank Community Association (SCA) has highlighted at every opportunity, that it remains critical for the Springbank Community to receive public benefits from the SR1 Project given the negative impact of the infrastructure and the physical barriers created within our community. Numerous community surveys have prioritized pathways and river access as recreational public needs. SR1 offers a unique opportunity to integrate such community needs into the overall “project package” by integrating recreational and public components into the Land Use Plan for the lands. We acknowledge that SR1 Operations combined with public integration opportunities also pose some unique challenges. With appropriate collaboration and mitigation, and with the referenced adoption of “adaptive practices”, we are confident that practical, acceptable, and safe practices can be developed and optimized over time to meet the various objectives for both operations and public use.

We also continue to stress that the Draft Land Use Plan addresses land use for the SR1 footprint only and fails to address the important *Joint Land Use Advisory Committee (JLUAC) recommendations to retain and integrate Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors (ATEC) lands adjacent to the SR1 footprint to provide highly desirable natural areas and public river access for the community and conservation for wildlife*. We recognize this administrative segmentation of ATEC owned lands within the Terms of Reference, but serious consideration to retain public lands for river access (i.e. defined as the “Southlands” in the JLUAC recommendations) is a key component of mitigating community concerns on the impact of SR1.

Please find below comments on the Draft Land Use Plan Policy 7.0 Public Access and Use of the Project Lands:

1. Policy 7.2.1 We support the segmentation of SR1 lands for managing public access and proposing restrictions to non-motorized use and non-throttle e-bikes.
2. Policy 7.2.2.
  - a) Closure Periods: The community has prioritized public access only on the lands along the pathway corridor and south of the berm adjacent to the Elbow River for public recreation access. Public access to lands north of the berm could be heavily restricted to facilitate operating closures and to mitigate public safety concerns. There is an opportunity to enable more flexible



extended access periods for the pathway and Southlands outside flood events by signage indicating restricted areas, and with fencing north of the pathway corridor. Benefits to extending periods for public access to the pathway and Southlands outside of actual flood events include:

- Minimize safety risk by allowing cyclists to use the pathway and stay off Hwy 22
  - The success of extending the Trans Canada Trail from Bragg Creek to Cochrane and regional pathways requires reasonable time periods where such a trail is open to the public.
3. Policy 7.2.3 Multi -Use: The broader vision is for SR1 to become part of a regional pathway system. A pathway corridor through SR1 lands via multi-use of berm maintenance roads would also support a safe planned extension of the Trans Canada Trail between Bragg Creek to Cochrane and the opportunity to connect to Harmony and Calgary. Much of the proposed regional pathway extension falls outside SR1 boundaries, however the segment within SR1 is critical to its success. Success for Trans Canada Trail extension and regional connections requires:
    - a) Facilitating “reasonable time periods” for public access.
    - b) Municipal and funding support which would be challenging if public access is heavily restricted.
    - c) Support and connections at ATEC boundaries to external regional pathways.
    - d) Support to optimize the multi-use of other ancillary and adjacent infrastructure where appropriate, such as side maintenance access roads and parking infrastructure.
    - e) Support opportunities to upgrade pathways with pavement or to enhance and repair.
    - f) Facilitate and optimize continuous pathway corridors across jurisdictions. See “Regional Needs and Connection Opportunities” in Appendix to this letter.
  4. Policy 7.2.4 The desire to limit the development of ancillary public infrastructure beyond pathways and restrict types of usage within SR1 is supported. However, public access to pathways requires some minimal facilitation also identified by JLUAC. The operations “parking area” proposed on ATEC lands adjacent to RR35 would provide a base level of multi-use parking for the public.
  5. *Southlands* -The ATEC lands south of the SR1 project are not included in the Draft Land Use Plan but were identified as a very important component of community benefits within the JLUAC Final Recommendations Report. The JLUAC recommendations were developed in collaboration with key community stakeholders and broader stakeholders with consensus in the JLUAC and are strongly supported by all community groups.

*The recommendations for pathways and public river access also support a broader regional vision for community connectivity and improved regional recreational infrastructure to generate important regional tourism opportunities. Implementation of the regional vision will be staged and requires collaboration with SR1 and external support and funding to fully implement. We understand that administratively the Draft Land Use Plan stewards specifically to the lands within the SR1 Footprint, but we stress the importance to advance JLUAC recommendations for all ATEC lands purchased as part of the SR1 Project. We request that a mechanism be developed to enable the community to be kept advised and to participate in future ATEC meetings to retain these lands for public use.*



STAPA and SCA trust that these comments are helpful in summarizing previous discussions, clarifying our concerns, and identifying gaps within the current Draft Land Use Plan. We are happy to answer any questions and look forward to continuing collaboration with you. Thank you for the opportunity to work with you and provide further feedback.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronda Rankin".

Ronda Rankin, President  
Springbank Trails and Pathways Association  
Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edmond Wittstock".

Edmond Wittstock, Vice President  
Springbank Trails and Pathways

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karin Hunter".

Karin Hunter, President  
Springbank Community Association

Cc.

Michael Uniacke, Alberta Agriculture & Irrigation (AGI)  
Dominic Kazmierczak, Rocky View County  
Devin LaFleche, Rocky View County  
Don Kochan, Deputy Reeve, Division 2, Rocky View County  
Kevin Hanson, Councillor, Division 1 Rocky View County  
Karin Hunter, Springbank Community Association (SCA)



**ADDENDUM To Draft Land Use Plan**  
Additional Regional Connection Considerations

Although details for specific regional pathway connectivity may be technically out of scope within the SR1 Draft Land Use Plan, an understanding of detailed regional connectivity requirements is necessary to ensure the final Land Use Plan can accommodate regional needs. The general pathway connection points are depicted by Starbursts in the Draft Land Use Plan Appendix B:

1. Hwy 22 at Diversion Channel: With heavy truck and RV traffic on Hwy 22, and the merging of traffic patterns into a traffic circle nearby at Hwy 8, a pedestrian crossing of Hwy 22 presents material public safety concerns. Given extensive ATEC jurisdiction along Hwy 22, a safe pathway corridor needs to be defined from the SR1 berm to the south boundary of Kamp Kiwanis lands (that ATEC lands also owns), or a mix of alignment jurisdictions including SR1, ATEC surplus lands, and “typical” ATEC Right of Way (ROW) along Hwy 22. Such a pathway corridor would facilitate a connection to a proposed trail extension from Bragg Creek to the Hwy 8 traffic circle. Three options are identified to mitigate public safety concerns and to cross Hwy 22:
  - a. The Diversion Channel will cross under Hwy 22 and is proposed to also serve as a safe wildlife crossing of Hwy 22. However, this also presents a multi-use opportunity to also enable a pedestrian crossing under Hwy 22 by adjusting rip rap and using the upper sides of the diversion channel for a pathway corridor. The design, effectiveness and potential conflicts of the diversion channel being used as both a pathway and as a wildlife crossing is not well understood. Wildlife underpass designs on highways typically include extensive wildlife fencing to restrict at-grade highway wildlife crossings and guide wildlife to cross highways at the underpass only. The concern for human wildlife conflict is likely reduced if use of the drainage channel by wildlife is not reinforced with extensive fencing along the Hwy, or if some partial screening of pedestrian traffic from wildlife is installed at the diversion channel under Hwy 22.
  - b. An Operations parking area is proposed on the east side of Hwy 22 near the berm which could be utilized as a multi-use area for the public. An Operations area is also proposed west of Hwy 22 at Township Rd 242 with an at-grade crossing of Hwy 22 identified for vehicular use at that intersection. A pathway corridor could be provided within ROW along the east side of Hwy 22, south from the SR1 berm and Operations parking area to Twp 242. An at-grade crossing at Twp 242 (potentially with pedestrian triggered solar operated flashing lights) could connect to a pathway corridor within ROW along the west side Hwy 22 ROW, north to the Hwy 8 traffic circle.
  - c. A pathway corridor could be provided from the berm along the ROW on the east side of Hwy 22 north to the Hwy 8 traffic circle, where some type of merging and pedestrian crossing would need to be identified. Public safety challenges are high given merging traffic movements and incremental traffic flows from Hwy 8. This option would still require an at-grade crossing of either Hwy 8 or 22 and remains problematic.
  - d. Connectivity from the berm to the traffic circle involves various levels of ATEC departments and ROW cross jurisdiction. The community requests some facilitation by a SR1 representative to



engage in a discussion with ATEC on the potential for establishing pathway corridors adjacent to Hwy 22 south from SR1 lands.

- e. Crossing the Elbow River is an additional challenge. The temporary solution may be to utilize the relatively wide shoulder on Hwy 22 to cross the Elbow River until either a new pedestrian bridge, cantilevered pedestrian bridge, or potential highway twinning occurs.
2. Low-Level Outlet Works (LLOW) and connections to RR40 and RR35 – Regional pathway connectivity requires a continuous pathway corridor between LLOW and RR40 at Springbank Rd. Recent upgrading on RR40 provides a paved shoulder and an underpass to cross Hwy 1 vs the congested and narrow Hwy 22 overpass at Hwy 1. The following options for a pathway corridor are proposed to be pursued and maintained as possibilities for regional pathway connectivity:
    - a. RR35 Connections
      - RR35 North: SR1 proposes an eastern Operations access Road from LLOW north to NE 19, then east along ATEC lands to RR35. A small parking area is also proposed on ATEC lands where this access road intersects with RR35. This eastern access road and parking area could be multi-purposed for public pathway development.
        - i. Initially a pathway could utilize/multi-use the gravel access road from LLOW to RR35 although sufficient ROW should be preserved to accommodate a future standalone paved pathway.
        - ii. A regional pathway alignment on County jurisdiction could then follow RR35 north to Springbank Rd and west to RR40. RR35 is currently a gravel surface and cost optimization along RR35 and may require additional ROW adjacent to RR35 on private lands which may be problematic.
        - iii. Although Springbank Rd is paved with a moderate shoulder, Springbank Rd is a busy artery and over the long term will also require acquisition of separate ROW for a standalone pathway.
      - RR35 South: JLUAC recommendations also included public access to the Outlet Lands south of the LLOW. This would be best facilitated through SR1 lands by an access pathway connecting to the berm/LLOW pathway and directly east of the LLOW across SR1 lands to RR35.
    - b. RR40 ROW Connections
      - A second option is to follow the “yellow line” shown on Appendix B just “inside” the perimeter of the flood area, and to designate a pathway corridor from LLOW to the undeveloped RR40 ROW along this perimeter. A fence could be considered between the flood area and pathway to not only facilitate potential grazing on flood lands, but also to discourage and segregate public access. It is proposed that ATEC retain a corridor for pathway in SR1 lands just inside the yellow perimeter up to RR40 ROW. It is recognized that ATEC have had negotiations with the landowner at the corner of RR40 and Springbank Rd which have implications on the use of RR40 ROW south of Springbank Rd for public access and that additional negotiations would be required.

**Comments from Springbank Community Planning Association (SCPA) on  
*Land Use Plan for the Springbank Offstream Reservoir Project***  
(dated/published February 2024) by Alberta Environment and Protected Areas

**General**

Can the SR1 Project be repurposed to hold water in the event that the current drought conditions continuing, as has been forecast? Based on current scientific evidence, there should also be a drought relief plan, which seems a more likely scenario than catastrophic flooding.

**2.1 Policy Directives (page 7)**

How do we ensure an equitable level of compatibility between the 3 Policy Categories of use and access?

1. Obviously, Flood Mitigation is the primary and highest priority access and use.
2. Then First Nations have “priority” access and use.
3. The general public have “secondary” access and use.

The plan needs to provide much more detail about the rights and priority of each category and how the “lower” category users are regularly notified or can find out if and when they are entitled to have access and use, e.g., If/when First Nations are exercising their “priority” access and use, how do members of the general public find out if and when they have access and use?

Physical signposts would help if posted at all public access points, however, if the public does not have a way of finding out the status before they leave home, then once they arrive at SR1, they may be inclined to ignore the sign.

What kind of communications network for access and use will be set up, how will it work and who will operate it? This would need to provide current details daily, weekly and monthly regarding safety and health concerns, as well as “priority” groups permitted.

Will there be enforcement of access and land uses? Is this the responsibility of GoA or RVC? Or City of Calgary?

**2.4 Project Land Ownership**

We need more details about recently acquired, adjacent Crown lands, that are outside the Project lands, e.g., South lands along the Elbow River as well as Kamp Kiwanis lands and amenities. We need additional land use plans that cover these Crown lands.

The South lands have great potential to provide diverse benefits for the local and downstream communities, e.g., drinking water quality; healthy aquatic life; conservation of riverine habitats for wildlife, native plants and healthy river; environmental education (water, climate change, flooding, drought), as well as public access (with restrictions). Kamp Kiwanis lands and amenities can also provide local benefits for recreational activities, e.g., pathways, parking lot as well as existing access and roads. The South

lands are critical for the health of the environment. They contain ephemeral wetlands that protect the water quality of the Elbow River. (Also see JLUAC Report – Recommendation 8 for more details.)

Specifically, the management of these South lands and those in the river floodplain on Kamp Kiwanis lands are subject to the measures specified in the South Saskatchewan River Basin (SSRB) Water Management Plan. SSRB is a national waterway with multiple sharing agreements that specify both volume and quality. Those agreements must be met when considering land uses. See [South Saskatchewan River Basin water management plan | Alberta.ca](#)

These lands are also overseen by the Elbow River Watershed Partnership (ERWP) which lists specific water quality measures to be maintained. Riparian zones and wetlands are critical components of the ecosystems in a watershed and they provide significant ecosystem services. [Riparian and Wetlands Areas | Elbow River Watershed Partnership \(erwp.org\)](#)

## **2.6 Management and Operational Structure**

The number of government ministries involved (AGI, FP, AEP/EPA, IR, AT etc.) does not impart great confidence that SR1 will be run efficiently by the “owner”. Add to that the involvement of Rocky View County and the FN Land Use Implementation Committee and there are (too) many entities.

When can we see a draft of the operational plan and procedures for the project? This plan should indicate who pays for the various management, operational and maintenance services. These are some important items that need to be addressed:

- Public announcement protocols and contact structure and procedures for normal operation and ongoing surveillance of SR1
- Emergency event contacts and procedures for this emergency event facility, e.g., to alert schools and local residents
- Dust suppression plan and procedures following a flood event
- Air quality monitoring network and control of fine particulate matter
- Toxicity monitoring and measurement after a flood event, e.g., from upstream septic fields or commercial operations
- Silt removal from vegetation so it can recover
- Water management strategy for release of water back into the river, water quality monitoring, drainage of standing water ponds/sloughs after a flood, mosquito control
- Public access and road management/transportation implications before and after a flood event
- Monitoring before, during and after a flood event, i.e., what kind of control and instrumentation will be implemented in SR1 and surrounding environment
- Emergency response plan
- Invasive species (vegetation, animal, insect) control plan
- Fire control plan



- Monitoring of hunting access and regulations
- Garbage cleanup plan

### **3.2.2 Closure Scenario #2 Annual Flood Season**

May 1 to July 31 seems to exceed the usual flood season – What can be done to shorten this closure period to allow for more public access in summer?

Will regular (annual) testing/filling of the infrastructure take place within the May 1 to July 31 timeframe?

### **Policy 5.4.2 Vegetation Management**

The lands within SR1 are native grasslands, covered with native shrubs, trees and plants, therefore this policy to mow and hay is physically impossible and would destroy the integrity of the native grasslands. This policy needs to be rewritten to focus on grazing (by livestock and wildlife) as the main management tool.

### **Policy 6.1.2 re First Nations access and use**

Erecting signage along the perimeter and at access points will help but will not solve the problem that the general public will not know specifically when and where they might be in danger, unsafe or unwelcome when entering the project lands, e.g., if hunting is underway or traditional uses that should not be disturbed are occurring.

As above, what kind of communications network for access and use will be set up, how will it work and who will operate it, so there are daily, weekly and monthly updates regarding safety and health concerns, as well as which “category” of groups are allowed.

### **Policy 7.2.3 Non-Motorized Recreational Use**

Obviously, it is key to connect the new pathway along the berm inside the SR1 project to pathways outside project lands. And to provide safe crossings of Hwy 22 and Springbank Road. See more below.

### **7.3 Wildlife Conservation Activities**

WMU 312, which currently permits “weapons” (firearms and crossbows) should be included within WMU 212, such that only archery and primitive weapons will be permitted. It is unsafe to have weapons used within the SR1 project lands where there is public access and First Nations access.

### **Appendix B**

The northern access point shown appears to be located on private land where public would be able to access. This map needs to be updated to show an alternative north access, e.g., on RR 35 south.

Will there still be access along RR 40 south and if so for whom, e.g., emergency response, operations, public? Will either of these range roads have parking space?

### **Hwy 22 – Safety**

With a public pathway through SR1, how do we assure the safety of recreational users (cyclists, walkers and other members of the public) and First Nations people crossing

Hwy 22 from the project lands to continue on to Redwood Meadows or Bragg Creek? We need a plan for providing safe crossing of Hwy 22 as well as a safe pathway alongside Hwy 22 to rejoin the pathway system further south (at Kamp Kiwanis). The safety of wildlife crossing this road from the project is also a concern. The large elk herd, as well as groups of deer and moose also pose a safety issue (collisions) for road users on Hwy 22, so wildlife crossing(s) need to be planned and maintained for the safety of all.

**Feedback sharing**

After the GoA survey and Rocky View County municipal surveys have closed and the comments have been analyzed, it would be beneficial to the local community to know the concerns or suggestions submitted and how they were addressed. An open public question/answer and comment exchange webpage would provide transparency and help to advance the resolution and problem-solving of public issues.

Comments prepared and submitted by Springbank Community Planning Association (SCPA), March 8, 2024