

Berland Smoky Access Plan: Information Letter 2008-05

Background

Through an extensive integrated land management initiative, the Foothills Landscape Management Forum (the Forum) developed the Berland Smoky Access Plan (the Plan). This work was carried out by representatives from energy and forestry industries, in consultation with the Department of Sustainable Resource Development (SRD).

The Plan identifies primary access routing within the Berland Smoky area as agreed to by the plan participants, and endorsed by SRD on June 23, 2006.

The Plan is posted on the following website:

<http://srd.alberta.ca/lands/usingpublicland/integratedlandmanagement/nwilinitiatives.aspx> and can be obtained from SRD at: 2nd Floor, South Petroleum Plaza 9915 – 108 Street Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2G8.

Expectations / Procedures

1. All primary access routing agreed to in the Plan will conform to the following:
 - Planning and construction shall be consistent with the Plan and with Information Letter 2003-23: "Oil and Gas Best Practices in the West Central Caribou Range"
 - At the time of disposition application, primary access routes may be requested to be up to and including all weather road standard. The Plan provides guidance on the location of primary corridors regardless of road standard.
 - Road disposition applications within the plan area will adhere to the plan's route selection criteria and guidelines.
 - At the time of disposition application industry will be expected to provide details of required stakeholder consultation and/or notification.
 - Collaboration and communication between industrial land users in the area shall be undertaken within the context of SRD Integrated Land Management principles. This will be reflected in appropriate disposition documentation (e.g., AOA's, EFR's).
 - Planning, construction and operation of roads shall incorporate the potential for shared use by other land users, and must address government requirements regarding public access. This will be reflected in appropriate disposition documentation (e.g., AOA's, EFR's).
 - Applications that remain consistent with primary access routes identified in the Plan will undergo a streamlined review and approval process, meaning that further evaluation of road standards and of alternative primary routing options will not be required, and further demonstration that a road is needed will not be required. Based on the site specific proposal submitted within the approved corridor, the road may be subject to site specific conditioning.
2. Applications that do not conform to, or that contradict the Plan, will be referred to the Plan membership to seek alignment with the existing Plan. Plan membership (including SRD) must support the change in the modified primary access routes and submit an amended corridor plan.
3. SRD will determine if information provided by primary access route applicants is consistent with the Plan and its guidelines.

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4. Temporary winter access along existing open seismic lines that does not adhere to the primary access routes in the plan may be permitted under special circumstances. When this winter access becomes redundant upon the construction of the primary route, such access will be reclaimed.
5. The impact on other resource values and users of new roads (i.e., spur roads) coming off of primary access routes shall be minimized through:
 - early consultation with other industrial land users and SRD;
 - integrated access planning between the industrial/commercial land users;
 - careful selection of road type, construction standards, anticipated lifespan needed, and conditions of use; and
 - appropriate and timely reclamation of these spur roads.
6. Industry will provide to SRD information on the status of the development and reclamation of roads within the primary access routes as such information becomes available. This information will be held by SRD and made available to existing and new land users in the area.
7. As broad policy directions emerge from the Alberta Government (e.g., West Central Caribou Landscape Management Plan; grizzly bear recovery strategies; Land-use Framework), or as new information becomes available from the Forum or other sources, this Information Letter and referenced Plan may need to be reviewed and modified to ensure consistency with provincial direction.

