

On Common Ground: Messages from the Agri-Environmental Partnership of Alberta

The Lower Athabasca Regional Plan has been Approved

On August 22, 2012, the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) was approved by cabinet. After three years of development and consultation, this is the first of seven Land-use Framework (LUF) regional plans to be completed and approved. The plan comes into effect September 1st, 2012. With its approval, decision makers in the Lower Athabasca, such as the NRCB, are now required to consider the direction provided by the regional plan in making their decisions. Furthermore, ARD is now responsible to monitor the fragmentation and conversion of agricultural land in the region and report back to Albertans.

In regards to agriculture, an objective of the plan is to “maintain and diversify the region’s agricultural industry”. To accomplish this, municipalities are encouraged to identify areas where agriculture should be the primary land use in the area and are encouraged to limit the fragmentation of these agricultural lands. The indicator used to measure success is “fragmentation and conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural land uses”.

The LARP was the first of seven regional plans to be approved. Consultation on the South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council (RAC) advice to government will be next and initial phases of the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan are underway (no RAC has been appointed yet). AEPA has recently reviewed and approved our process for choosing nominees to sit on the subsequent RACs.

If you wish to know more, please see the Government of Alberta news release:
<http://alberta.ca/NewsFrame.cfm?ReleaseID=/acn/201208/328544FC7A7B0-A6E2-C083-01E1B350E37A54C2.html>

For more information on the regional plan, visit www.landuse.alberta.ca.