



Proposed Land Exchange Between Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park and the Municipal District of Bighorn

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is being proposed?

Tourism, Parks and Recreation (TPR) is proposing a land exchange between Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park and the Municipal District (MD) of Bighorn.

As part of the exchange, the MD of Bighorn would receive approximately 19.2 hectares of land of lower ecological value in exchange for approximately 28 hectares of lands with higher ecological value to be added to Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park. In addition, another 40.47 hectares of public land would be added to the park. The proposed land exchange is considered to be mutually beneficial to Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park and the MD of Bighorn.

You can view a map of the proposed land exchange at www.albertaparks.ca/consult/.

2. Where is Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park located and what values does it protect?

Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park is located in central Kananaskis Country in western Alberta, and stretches throughout the Bow Valley adjacent to Highway 1. The park preserves and protects 34,446 hectares of alpine, sub-alpine, and montane environments. The site was established as a Wildland Provincial Park in 1998 under the *Provincial Parks Act* with the intent to preserve and protect natural heritage and provide opportunities for backcountry recreation. The park was expanded in 2001 to include the Bow Flats and Yamnuska Natural Areas, which added approximately 2900 hectares of land.

Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park accommodates widespread use from the local community as well as tourists from around the world. The park provides scenic and accessible backcountry recreation opportunities including hiking, rock climbing, mountain biking, fishing, and equestrian and hunting opportunities.

The park contains diverse landforms characteristic of the Rocky Mountain Natural Region. These include high ridges and cliffs alternating with shale slopes or colluvial material on lower slopes, interspersed with glaciated valleys and active river floodplains. As well, several unique and important geological features are present such as major thrust faults and fossil beds. It also protects the historic site of Georgetown, an old coal mining community, and several significant archaeological sites.

Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park contains areas of important fish and wildlife habitat and several rare plant and animal species in the area, including the yellow lady's slipper orchid. It contains a regional wildlife movement corridor for wolves, cougars, bears, and elk that move between and through Banff National Park, Kananaskis Country, and the Town of Canmore.

3. How was the land exchange proposal developed?

Development of the Dead Man's Flats area adjacent to the park has been proposed since the early 1990s, and a 1995 judicial review directed that an environmental assessment be completed. Since then, the area east of the hamlet of Dead Man's Flats has been recognized as a significant wildlife corridor. An underpass at Highway 1 was constructed in 2004 to better enable wildlife movement.

Since 2004, the Government of Alberta has been in discussions with the MD of Bighorn regarding a mutually beneficial land exchange to better protect this important wildlife corridor.

Focused engagement sessions with local First Nations and local area stakeholders occurred over 2009-10. No major concerns were raised by the First Nations and local stakeholders.

4. What land will be added to the park and why is this land exchange needed?

Approximately 28 hectares of land would be transferred from the MD of Bighorn and added to Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park. These ecologically significant parcels along the Bow River and east of Dead Man's Flats will better protect the wildlife corridor by connecting the existing underpass of Highway 1 to the park. In addition, another 40.47 hectares of public land adjacent to Dead Man's Flats would be added to the park to further enhance the corridor's protection.

5. What features or values exists on the lands proposed to be removed from the park?

The 19.2 hectares of land proposed to be transferred from the Wildland Park to the MD of Bighorn was previously disturbed and is deemed to be of lower ecological value than the lands to be added to the park. The land proposed to be removed from the park is predominantly an old gravel pit location near the junction of Highway 1A and Highway 1X, adjacent to the hamlet of Dead Man's Flats. The site was part of the previous Yamnuska Natural Area and historically functioned as a staging area for alpine and orienteering activities. The staging area has not been used for some time as a formalized staging area to the north of the site has become more popular.

6. What is the MD of Bighorn proposing to do with the lands to be transferred from the park?

The MD of Bighorn is proposing that the transferred lands from the park be zoned for light industrial use, such as equipment and vehicle storage, or light manufacturing and distribution.

The land exchange also includes the transfer of three parcels of public land totalling approximately 25.8 hectares to the MD of Bighorn.

7. How can I comment on the proposed land exchange?

Public input is encouraged and important. Send in your comments, suggestions and concerns by clicking on the online comment button, or by sending an [email](#). You can also mail in your feedback to the address below. Feedback must be submitted by November 29, 2010.

Online: [Online Feedback Form](#)

By Email: <mailto:ParkNews@gov.ab.ca>

By Mail: Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation
Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park Proposed Land Exchange
2nd floor, Oxbridge Place
9820-106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 2J6

8. What happens after the public consultation has ended?

All comments will be considered and a decision will be made on whether to proceed with the exchange. A summary of public comments and the resulting decision will be posted on www.albertaparks.ca/consult.