



Conducting an Environmental Review prior to Construction in Special Areas

Intent

All industrial and commercial activities that disturb any land administered by the Special Areas Board will be required to have an Environmental Review prior to construction. The Environmental Review will consist of a site specific assessment and related information searches to compile a comprehensive overview of the environmental conditions at proposed development locations.

Background

The Special Areas Board has always emphasized preservation of native range while maintaining industrial and commercial development. This grassland is an important resource with intrinsic value, used for agriculture, industrial, commercial and recreational purposes. This land also provides habitat to many wildlife and plant species many of which are classified as Species at Risk.

Special Areas has recently experienced a period of intense development. This surge of activity has identified the need for a program that will aid in the management and protection of environmental resources located within Special Areas. The Special Areas Board has developed the Environmental Review Program to better manage surface disturbances and protect significant environmental features.

Requirements

An Environmental Review will be required for disturbed land and native range. It will provide an assessment that evaluates the following components: land use, landscape, soil, vegetation, fish and wildlife, species at risk, wetlands and waterbodies, and cultural and historical resources. A project description and conservation and reclamation plan will also be required in the Environmental Review.

Reference

A Guide to Completion of the Environmental Review has been prepared to assist operators in the completion of the assessment. An Environmental Review Form has also been prepared to compile the information. The guide and form are available at <http://www.specialareas.ab.ca/> under Forms and Policies.

Implementation

The Environmental Review Program will be implemented on January 1, 2010; thereafter, all industrial or commercial applications must include a completed ER form.