



# Special Areas Environmental Review Program Update

## Intent

The intent of the Special Areas Environmental Review program update is to align pre-application disposition requirements of the Environmental Review with regulatory compliance set out across multi-jurisdictional areas (i.e wildlife; plant and wildlife species-at-risk; wetlands and waterbodies, First Nations, etc.)

## 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.

The Special Areas Board initiated the Environmental Review program on January 1, 2010 to better manage surface disturbances and protect significant environmental features.

The Special Areas Board has developed the Environmental Review Program to better manage surface disturbances and protect significant environmental features during the planning, construction, operations and reclamation of industrial activities.

## Requirements

An Environmental Review will be required with applications for new surface dispositions on

Special Areas public land. It will provide an assessment that evaluates the following components: land use, landscape, soil, vegetation, fish and wildlife, species at risk, wetlands and waterbodies, cultural and historical resources and First Nations consultation. The project proponent must demonstrate a reasonable understanding of the project and the environment into which it is to be placed. This will include potential impacts associated with the project and mitigation measures that will be taken to address these impacts.

## Reference

The Guide to Completion of the Environmental Review has been updated to reflect regulatory requirements and 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 implementation of the updated Environmental Review Guide and Form will be on January 1, 2021. Applicants are encouraged to collect field data in alignment with the update Environmental Review to support an accurate application for the project after the implementation date.