



**Report on the 2016 Compliance Plan for
Activities on Public Land
Authorized by the Public Land Enforcement Committee
(PLEC)**

March 24, 2017

Executive Summary

Education, prevention and enforcement are integral components of addressing public land abuse. A rejuvenated public land compliance program was initiated in 2016 with the ultimate goal of establishing a benchmark by which to measure future efforts, and to create a solid foundation to build on in coming years. Ultimately, responsible stewardship of public land is a responsibility shared by both government and the public.

The Government of Alberta recognizes that a collaborative effort is needed from various departments, agencies, and the public in order to ensure the laws and regulations that protect our public land are understood and followed. In 2016, staff from Environment and Parks, Justice and Solicitor General's Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch (FWEB), Agriculture and Forestry, the RCMP, and other municipal enforcement agencies worked closely to deliver an effective and efficient compliance assurance program across the province.

Education:

- Government staff participated in six trade shows across Alberta.
- Educational social media content engaged tens of thousands of Albertans:
 - Approximately 45,000 people liked, commented on or shared the year's top post on Environment and Parks' Respect the Land in Alberta Facebook page. The post was related to the reinstatement of specified penalties.
- The Alberta Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch's (FWEB) Facebook page saw an increase of 300 percent in their fan base, and some posts reached as many as 190,000 people.
- A total of 49,100 educational materials (brochures, maps, information cards) were distributed.

Prevention:

- Environment and Parks' Operations Division and Parks Division, as well as Justice and Solicitor General's FWEB, contributed 8,019 person-days towards the delivery of the public land compliance program.
- A total of 77,549 contacts were made with recreational users on public land.
- A total of 1,479 educational, wayfinding, and regulatory signs were ordered with many erected on public land. Signage will continue to be installed into 2017/18.

Enforcement:

- From May through to the end of 2016, a total of 6,835 enforcement actions occurred, 854 of which were for a combination of *Public Lands Act* and Public Lands Administration Regulation violations.

Context

Albertans use vacant public land for a diverse range of outdoor activities such as cross-country skiing, horseback riding, hiking, photography, mountain biking, hunting, fishing, camping, trapping, canoeing, birding, eco-tourism, and motorized recreation (e.g. off-highway vehicle (OHV) use).

Outdoor recreational opportunities are a big part of the outstanding quality of life in Alberta. However, the growing demand for these types of opportunities is contributing to undesirable environmental impacts, public safety concerns, and conflicts between various users. These challenges did not arise overnight, and likewise, they will take some time to resolve. A few examples of these chronic challenges include:

- Vehicles being operated and parked on the bed, shore and/or in the water of Alberta's streams, rivers, lakes, and wetlands.
- Random camping spots located in environmentally sensitive areas and utilized for the entire summer by one user.
- Random trails that are well established and used by many vehicles, causing significant environmental damage.
- Garbage, vehicles, and structures abandoned on public land.

Land-use Framework

The Land-use Framework identifies managing recreation use of public land as one of its priority actions. It outlines the need for a strategy to better manage growing recreational pressures and activities in Alberta.

The Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) and South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP) both identify the increased pressure being placed on the land due to more people seeking outdoor recreational opportunities. To address this pressure, a wide range of recreation experiences and tourism opportunities that meet the preferences of regional residents and visitors need to be provided. Additionally, the SSRP identifies the need for education, awareness, and compliance programs to promote and support responsible land use and identified shared stewardship as a key strategy. Land-use Framework plans continue to be developed for all regions in Alberta and are expected to identify recreational use of public lands as a key component.

Recreation Management

Over the past 18 months, Environment and Parks, in cooperation with cross-government colleagues, has been working to advance outdoor recreation management on public lands. The ED4Rec team (comprised of members from all divisions of Environment and Parks and other key departments) is responsible for steering the future work related to the outdoor recreation management on public land.

Environment and Parks is moving ahead with developing a long-term outdoor recreation management program for public land. The program will be adapted from the 4E's (Engineering, Education, Enforcement and Evaluation) of OHV management as outlined by the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council to successfully manage recreation on public land.

The establishment of the recreation management program demonstrates Alberta's commitment to strong environmental management and outdoor recreation. The focus on recreation management presents an opportunity to address poor behaviours on the landscape, while simultaneously supporting recreation and tourism to Albertans.

Intent for the 2016 Public Land Compliance Program

In recognition of the growing pressures on public land, the province set out to collaboratively develop and deliver a compliance program as part of the overall approach to managing activities on public land and ensuring compliance with rules and regulations. The *2016 Compliance Plan for Public Activities on Public Land* (the Plan) leveraged resources from various ministries and other enforcement agencies, recognizing that compliance assurance outcomes would not be achieved in one year, but would involve a series of steps over a longer period of time.

The Plan incorporated education, prevention, and enforcement elements with a focus on offences under the *Public Lands Act* and the Public Lands Administration Regulation, as well as other violations encountered on Alberta's public land. These initiatives are an integral component of a comprehensive compliance program.

The **Education** component promoted compliance by raising awareness of environmental protection and management, regulatory requirements, how to comply with those requirements, and the consequences of non-compliance. Education was also used to encourage environmental stewardship.

The **Prevention** component supported compliance through increased Government staff and officer presence on the land base and other methods, such as installation of signs at trailheads to prevent inappropriate vehicles from accessing a trail system. Prevention is a shared responsibility and includes the activities and actions of both the government and the public.

The **Enforcement** component ensured that issues of non-compliance were addressed. This included actions that stopped, remedied, deterred, and prosecuted violations where appropriate. Deterrence and prosecution measures were used to address contraventions and contributed towards reducing the likelihood of repeat contraventions.

Priorities

Priorities were identified to ensure efforts were focused on activities that pose the highest risk of environmental damage:

- Wheeled and tracked vehicles being operated and parked on the bed, shore and/or in the water of Alberta's streams, rivers, lakes, and wetlands.
- Random camping in the same location for greater than 14 days (including squatters).
- Damage or loss to public lands (including dumping of garbage).
- Enforcement of regulations in Public Land Use Zones (PLUZ's).

Coordinated and Efficient Delivery

A strong, coordinated, and multi-departmental/agency approach was identified as the route forward.

- Working collaboratively with other departments and agencies, all Environment and Parks regions developed and implemented a public lands enforcement program focused on the above provincial priorities, regional concerns, and resources available.
- Justice and Solicitor General's Fish and Wildlife Officers expanded their mandate to include public lands enforcement and provided an enhanced enforcement response to serious

public land violations across the province.

- Seasonal Park Rangers and permanent Conservation Officers provided an enforcement presence primarily along the eastern slopes as well as an increased enforcement presence in the Castle area.
- Other enforcement partners such as the RCMP, Sheriffs Branch and/or municipal peace officers provided an enforcement presence.

2016 Achievements (May to December 2016)

In addition to a coordinated and increased enforcement presence on public land, specified penalties (fines) for many public land offences were also reintroduced so that officers may issue tickets instead of court summons in many cases. Educational outreach and stakeholder engagement also demonstrated that the Government of Alberta is committed to promoting safe, responsible, and sustainable recreational activities on public land.

Partnerships

Partnerships and close working relationships have been strengthened with various Government of Alberta and partner enforcement agencies.

- Environment and Parks: Environment and Parks staff, including Parks Conservation Officers, worked together to establish local priorities, develop processes, and address issues specific to their regions.
- Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch (FWEB): Senior FWEB management collaborated with Environment and Parks management and staff to establish and clarify priorities for the recreational use of public lands. The priorities for public lands enforcement were imbedded into local district work plans that guide field officer work throughout the year.
- Agriculture and Forestry: Environment and Parks staff have a close working relationship with Forestry staff ensuring they are aware of program and advising of any non-compliance issues. Environment and Parks staff assists Forestry in enforcing fire bans and restrictions.
- RCMP: Well established relationships with local RCMP detachments have ensured that enhanced enforcement is present on vacant public lands at key times (long weekends), and has resulted in an overall increased presence of enforcement personnel. Environment and Parks staff have had joint patrols with local RCMP, where possible, and when RCMP resources allow. These include vehicle patrols, quad/snowmobile patrols, and boat patrols.
- Municipal Peace Officers: The County of Clearwater and the Rocky Mountain House Community Peace Officers have expanded appointments for vacant public land and work closely with Environment and Parks. Many other municipal agencies also support regional programs.
- Justice and Solicitor General's Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Branch: Provided assistance with a number of Joint Forces Operations where multiple compliance agencies cooperate to focus efforts on a particular activity or location.

Report on Education

The Education component of any compliance assurance program is critical for a successful program. Informing the public of the rules promotes compliance and environmental stewardship. A number of educational initiatives have taken place over the past year with more planned.

Community Outreach Events Participated in 2016

- Red Deer Sportsman and Outdoor Adventure Show (Feb 26-28)
- Edmonton Boat and Sportsman Show (March 10-13)
- Peace River Trade Show (April 8)
- Clear Hills County Trade Show (April 29-30)
- La Crete Community Trade Show (April 29-30)
- Edmonton Cottage Life and Cabin Show (April 22-24)
- Various Special Event Days across the province
- Recreational Club meetings and Annual General Meetings
- Weed Days (focused on the spread of invasive weeds on public land and responsible OHV use)
- Stakeholder sessions (alternate route to Cadomin Mountain trail, Teck's trail meeting, etc.)

Education Materials Developed and Distributed

- 7,500 responsible camping/OHV brochures
- 3,000 random camping door hangar notices (providing an awareness of the 14 day camping rules)
- 2,600 'Know B4 U Go' information cards
- 1,500 'Wheels out of Water' OHV stickers
- 2,000 waterproof licence/registration holders
- Delivered new 'Enjoy Don't Destroy' posters to OHV retailers
- 10,000 'Leave Nothing Behind' campsite garbage bags
- 10,000 'Report It' notepads and pens
- 12,500 Bighorn Back Country Brochures
- Magnetic fleet vehicle decals (Know the Law...)
- PLUZ maps for the Kananaskis, Ghost and Hinton Coal Branch Public Land Use Zones

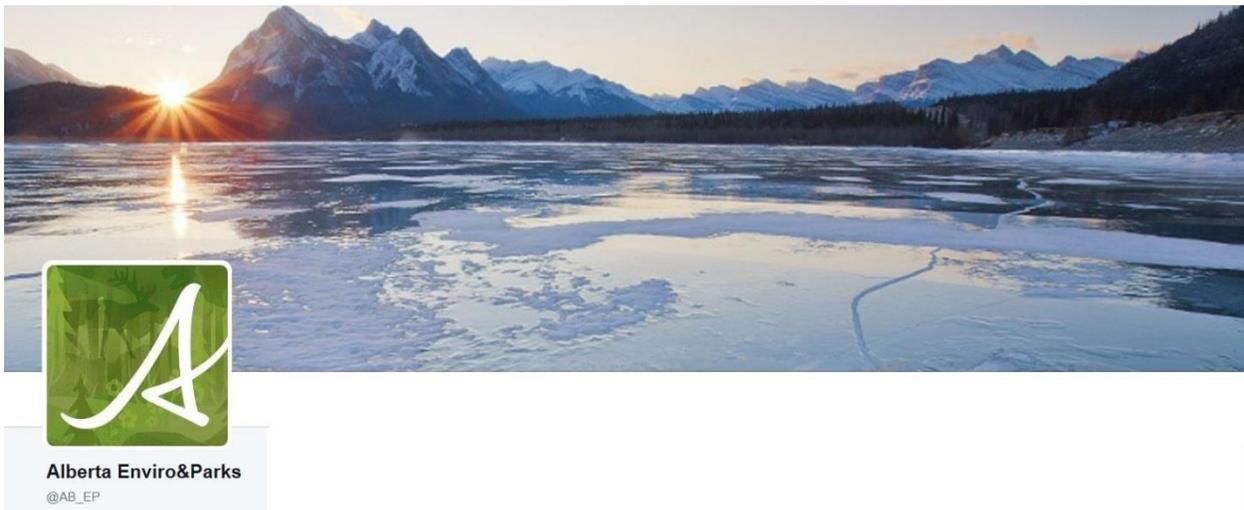
Education, Advertising, and Partnerships

- Facebook advertising focused on responsible backcountry recreation from August 23 – September 2. The campaign reached nearly 191,000 Albertans through more than 917,000 ad impressions.
- Responsible recreation advertising in the August edition of Alberta Outdoorsmen.
- Partnership with the Alberta OHV Association to distribute responsible recreation education material to the Association's members.
- The Environment and Parks Information Centre (1-877-944-0313) provided information to the public in response to general inquiries regarding public lands (300 requests) in the 2016 calendar year.

Social Media Awareness and Engagement

Environment and Parks and FWEB regularly share relevant posts and tweets between each ministry's account.

Respect the Land in Alberta Facebook Page is Albertans' page to share information and ask questions about camping, biking, hiking, and riding on Alberta's public lands. The page has a very engaged OHV and random camping audience. As of January 2017, the Respect the Land Facebook page had 3,459 likes, a 38 percent increase from the previous year.



Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Facebook Page is used to promote the responsible use of public lands and receive reports from the public about violations. This page's fan base increased by almost 300 percent and is Justice and Solicitor General's most successful social media page. As of January 25, 2017, there were 12,522 followers.



Posts Related to Public Lands Enforcement

- Approximately 45,000 people liked, commented on or shared the year's top post on Environment and Parks' Respect the Land in Alberta Facebook page. The post was related to the reinstatement of specified penalties.
- A post on the Fish and Wildlife Enforcement page about charges laid for driving in Waiparous Creek reached over 190,000 people.

Alberta Environment and Parks Twitter Account is the official Twitter account for the Ministry, which communicates major announcements, Ministry business activities, and good news stories on environmental management. The account engages in general environmental messaging on how the government is supporting strong environmental stewardship. It saw a significant increase in Twitter followers this year, which could be due to the increase in prominence for environmental issues in Alberta.

Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Twitter Account is the official Twitter account for FWEB and is used to communicate relevant announcements, stories related to enforcement actions and convictions of resource abusers, and good news stories about officers engaging with their community. The account is often used to link to Facebook posts to provide even more resource stewardship messaging.

Report on Prevention

The prevention component is another critical aspect of an effective compliance assurance program. Having staff and officers on the landscape providing information and advising of the rules reinforces expectations by the public. The posting of signs further compliments prevention efforts in the same manner. Prevention is a shared responsibility and includes the activities and actions of the ministries and the public.

Staff and Officer Presence on Public Lands

Environment and Parks Operations Division, Parks Division, and Justice and Solicitor General FWEB contributed 8,019 person-days towards the program and made 77,549 contacts with members of the public.

Signage

A total of 1,479 educational, wayfinding, and regulatory signs were ordered and delivered. Additional signs have been ordered and will be erected throughout 2017. Following are the total number of signs delivered to each region in Environment and Parks, Operations Division:

- 210 signs – Lower Athabasca Region (LAR)
- 210 signs – Peace Region
- 492 signs – Upper Athabasca Region (UAR)
- 381 signs – Red Deer/North Saskatchewan Region (RDNS)
- 186 signs – South Saskatchewan Region (SSR)

Report on Enforcement

Deterrence and prosecution measures are used to address public land use violation and contribute towards reducing the likelihood of repeat offences.

By increasing the enforcement presence on public land and reintroducing specified penalties for public land related offences, the department is demonstrating to stakeholders and the public that it is serious about managing outdoor recreation. A coordinated enforcement program spanning the mandate of several ministries and multiple jurisdictions was imperative to increasing enforcement efforts.

The statistics reported represent compliance activities on public land only and do not carry over to Alberta Park's land bases (provincial parks, provincial recreation areas, and wildland provincial parks). All graphs have been generated from the ENFOR database that is used by the officers with the Parks Division and FWEB to record patrol data, significant events and enforcement actions taken to address resource violations.

While the focus of this report is on public land enforcement, officers conducting patrols on public lands enforce other legislation relating to public safety (i.e. OHV, liquor, fire bans), hunting, fishing, and other offences encountered. The following charts provide a breakdown of the enforcement actions for specific pieces of legislation. Enforcement actions includes charges, written warnings, time to produce documents, evictions, information letters, enforcement orders, and 24-hour suspensions.

Types of Enforcement Actions

- **Written Warning** – a formal warning that documents the details of an offence.
- **Prosecution** – a charge that proceeds through the provincial court system. For most recreation related offences, these are typically issued via a violation ticket or an appearance notice.
- **Time to Produce** –before proceeding with a licencing prosecution (such as for OHV licencing/registration/insurance) an officer may issue a 'time to produce' document, giving the person the opportunity to produce proof that their paperwork is in order. This is often

used in conjunction with a ticket so that the person understands the consequences and does not need to be re-served if they fail to send in the proof.

Enforcement Action - <i>Public Lands Act (PLA)</i> and Public Lands Administration Regulation (PLAR)	Written Warning	Prosecution	Grand Total
PLAR 32(2)(A) person fail to obtain a permit to undertake a use or activity on vacant public land that could reasonably be expected to occur for a period longer than 14 days	216	3	219
PLAR 181(B) person within PLUZ /recreation area/recreation trail fail to comply with signs and notices or request of an officer	183	34	217
PLAR 43 use wheeled/tracked conveyance to enter on/occupy vacant public land that is bed or shore	121	15	136
PLAR 185(1)(A) no person shall, within any PLUZ, operate an on-highway vehicle, except on a highway	34	32	66
PLAR 185(1)(B) unlawfully operate an off-highway vehicle or snow vehicle within any PLUZ	15	27	42
PLAR 185(7)(A) camp within one kilometre of a public land recreation area/provincial recreation area located within the PLUZ	30	1	31
PLA054(1)(E) cause, permit or suffer the disturbance of any public land in a manner that results in injury to the bed or shore of a lake or other body of water in the vicinity of public land	5	3	8
PLAR 195 damage/deface/destroy/remove any resource/firewood without authorization	8	0	8
PLA054(1)(A.1) no person shall cause, permit or suffer loss or damage to public land	3	4	7
PLAR SCH4 PART A S.2(A) camp within one kilometre of forest recreation area or roadway located within the Kananaskis country PLUZ	6	0	6
PLAR SCH7 S.58(B) every person who is within the zone shall comply with the instructions, prohibitions and directions contained in signs and notices posted in or about the zone under this regulation	5	1	6
PLAR SCH7 S.59(1)(B) unlawfully operate off-highway vehicle or snow vehicle in castle special management area PLUZ	1	5	6
PLA054(1)(B) did cause, permit or suffer the existence on public land of any structure or excavation	5	0	5
PLAR 181(A) person within PLUZ /recreation area/recreation trail fail to comply with the lawful orders, instructions and directions of an officer	0	5	5
PLA047(1)(A) did occupy land without being the holder of a disposition authorizing the person to do so.	4	0	4
PLA056(1)(D) no person shall occupy public land who is not the holder of a disposition or of an authorization under section 20 authorizing the person to do so and is not otherwise authorized to do so under this act and the regulations	2	2	4
PLA056.1(F) no person shall fail to comply with an order of the director under section 47.1	3	1	4
PLAR 185(7)(B) start or maintain an open fire within one kilometre of a public land recreation area/provincial recreation area located within the PLUZ	4	0	4
PLA054.01(2)(A) travel/enter on closed road	2	1	3
PLAR 188(1) unauthorized set trap, use explosive, discharge firearm in PLRA/PLRT	3	0	3
PLAR SCH4 PART R S.54(1) the operation of a motor vehicle with a dry weight that does not exceed 363 kilograms (800 pounds), as determined by the manufacturer of the vehicle, is permitted in the willow creek PLUZ only in areas and on trails that have been designated for that purpose by signs or notices posted under this regulation	2	1	3

PLAR SCH4 PART R S.55(1) camp or start/maintain an open fire in willow creek PLUZ - not authorized by signs/notices	3	0	3
PLAR SCH7 S.59(1)(A) unlawfully operate on-highway vehicle in castle special management area PLUZ	1	2	3
PLA054(1)(A.2)activities on, or the use of, public land that is likely to result in loss or damage to public land.	0	2	2
PLAR 183(1) fail to keep PLUZ and improvements in satisfactory condition	0	2	2
PLAR 32(2)(D) did enter on or occupy public land where the use or activity is likely to cause unreasonable loss or damage to vacant public land	2	0	2
PLA054(1)(D) did cause, permit or suffer the doing of any act on public land that may injuriously affect watershed capacity	1	0	1
PLAR 183(2) fail to restore PLUZ to clean/tidy condition when vacating	1	0	1
PLAR 185(4)(A) OHV/ motorcycle within 100 m of lakeshore in PLUZ	0	1	1
PLAR SCH4 PART H S.30(1)(B) operate OHV or snow vehicle within zone (off trail or closed trail)	0	1	1
Grand Total	660	143	803

Summary

A collaborative, cross-ministry approach, including other enforcement agencies was essential for the successful development and delivery of the public land compliance program. The results achieved in 2016 demonstrate the effectiveness of such a multi-discipline approach, the largest effort yet.

A balance of education, prevention, and enforcement components is required to encourage environmental awareness and stewardship while providing deterrence to those whom do not comply with the rules.

The 2017 public land compliance program will build on the successes of the 2016 program and make improvements where required. As recreational pressures on Alberta's public land continue to increase, our recreational management and enforcement strategies must continue to evolve to meet these challenges.