

ABOUT PUBLIC LANDS



Information on

- **History**
- **Crown Land**
- **Public Land**
- **Public Land Use**

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Public Lands

History

On May 2, 1670, King Charles II of England granted the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay (The Hudson's Bay Company) the right to trade, as well as all the territorial rights to colonize and govern the area known as Rupert's Land. This land was located in what is today Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and the Northwest Territories.

From 1670 to 1870, Western Canada was administered by the Hudson's Bay Company, primarily for fur trading. The company actively discouraged colonization and land settlement as it believed the fur industry would be harmed.

In 1870, the Hudson's Bay Company sold its land to Canada for a number of concessions. Subsequent to this the provinces were formed. Alberta entered the Confederation in 1905.

In 1930, Canada transferred control for the natural resources in Alberta to the province. Alberta passed the *Provincial Lands Act* on March 28, 1931, for the administration of lands, minerals, forests, fisheries and to control the drilling of gas wells. At that time, there were already 3,778 grazing leases held in the province covering 3,220,161 acres. In 1949, this legislation was amended to become the *Public Lands Act*.

Crown Land

The term "Crown land" refers to provincial and federal government lands. The provincial parks (administered under the *Provincial Parks Act*) and public land (administered under the *Public Lands Act*) are an example of provincial Crown land.

Public Land

In the 1970s, the provincial government began using "public land" in place of "Crown land" when referring to land administered under the *Public Lands Act*. This was done to avoid confusion with other federal and provincial land. This didn't affect the dispositions or the rights of the disposition holders as grazing lease rights are allocated by statute and not Common Law.

Public Land Use

Public land administered under the *Public Lands Act* is owned by the government of Alberta. Its use and allocation are outlined in the Act. Public land is divided into two categories - the White Area and Green Area, as shown on the map.

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The White Area (settled portion) consists of the populated central, southern, and Peace River areas of the province. The Green Area (forested portion) comprises most of northern Alberta as well as the mountain and foothills areas along the province's western boundary.

In the White Area, public land is part of the agricultural landscape. It's managed for various uses including agriculture, recreation, soil and water conservation, and fish and wildlife habitat. Some parts of the province have large tracts of public land while other parts have very few scattered parcels. Most of the public land in the White Area is under disposition or is otherwise committed. People who wish to use public land need to consult with the disposition holder and if required, submit a formal application.

In the Green Area, public land is managed for timber production, watershed, wildlife and fisheries, recreation and other uses. Agricultural use is limited to grazing where it's compatible with other uses. Grazing on public land in the Rocky Mountain Forest Reserve (headwaters of the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers) is administered under the *Forest Reserves Act*. The remainder of grazing in the Green Area is administered under the *Public Lands Act*.

This information is intended for convenience of reference only. The current *Public Lands Act* and regulations should be consulted for all purposes of interpreting and applying the law.

If you require updated information, contact any of the offices below:

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
Lands Division
Land Dispositions Branch
South Tower, Petroleum Plaza
9915 - 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2G8
Telephone: (780) 427-3464

Rangeland Management
South Tower, Petroleum Plaza
9920 - 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2M4
Telephone: (780) 427-3595

Forestry Division
Forest Management
9920 - 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2M4
Telephone: (780) 422-4590

OR call the Lands Division office in your area.

OR you can visit the Lands Division Website:
http://www.srd.gov.ab.ca/land/c_1.html