

Bighorn Country Proposal: Public Information Session Guide

Questions asked and/or submitted February 1 – 4, 2019

Questions about the Public Consultation Process

1. Alberta Environment & Parks (AEP) is currently closing trails throughout the Bighorn Region – specific areas this proposal is based on. Why is the government acting before the consultation process is completed?
 - a) Is it a done deal?
2. What groups were consulted and had input to the development of the Bighorn Country Proposal?
 - a) Has the government made publicly available a list of stakeholder groups identified as key participants in the collaborative process set out by AEP?
3. How many meetings has the Minister or AEP staff had with stakeholder groups since the proposal was announced?
 - a) Who were the meetings with?
 - b) Can we see a list?
4. As an OHV user, I want to know if any local clubs or the AOHVA have been identified as an important stakeholder group and a key participant in the collaborative process as described by the Government of Alberta?
5. What impact will my input and these sessions have on the final outcome and the decisions made?
6. What kind of weight is given to people's input at these sessions?
 - a) People who are participating.
 - b) People who live, work and recreate in the area.
 - c) People who have volunteered to maintain this area for years – as opposed to people who never set foot on these lands but want to dictate how they are used.
7. Who will be consolidating all of the comments from these sessions?
8. Will the comments from these sessions be made available upon verbatim and by request, rather in a summarized format?
 - a) Will all the questions brought forward be answered and published?
9. Can submissions made by various organizations / individuals be shared with all participants?

10. How do you ensure this is a transparent process?
11. Who designed the survey? The survey questions seem to be biased in that my true opinions cannot be answered in the format provided.
12. Are these sessions primarily to provide information or to really engage Albertans in the process?
 - a) When does the conversation begin, these are only information sessions?
13. How collaborative do you see this process as being?
14. How empowered are Albertans in determining the final outcome?
15. When will the final decision about the Bighorn Country Proposal be made?
 - a) When will it be announced?
 - b) When will be implemented?
16. How many surveys have been completed to date?
17. How many letters have been received by the government to date?
18. How many people attended the previous information sessions?
19. Can you share the methodology behind the survey?
 - a) If, as the government is saying, Albertans are overwhelmingly in support of the proposal, why are so many people showing up at the information sessions and rallies to oppose the Bighorn Country Proposal?
 - b) Can you prove that people who live outside of Alberta are not responding to the survey and polls referenced by the government and ENGOs?
20. In previous Telephone Town Halls, Minister Phillips said that The "Bighorn Proposal" was created from the input received through the NRSP and Regional Advisory Committee. Can you please point to the specific recommendations of those reports where actions under the Bighorn Country Proposal were identified?
21. What's different about this new consultation process compared to previous consultations?
22. How will people be advised of the results?
23. Is a similar process being considered or planned for any other region of the province at this time?
24. The last major land use changes (Castle, Livingstone/Porcupine Hills PLUZ) were done outside of the legislative requirement in presenting to the Legislative

Assembly, with Ministerial Orders of Council. Do you know if this massive proposal being done outside the formal Regional Planning will be presented to the legislature for debate – or passed similarly as those previously?

25. Through published and auditable documentation, will you ensure that the implications of Economic, Social, Environmental benefits and trade-offs in your Bighorn Country Proposal are fully examined, reported then vetted by affected stakeholders in the Clearwater region?
26. When will the Report for the NSRP RAC consultations/survey be completed, published and made publicly available?

Questions about the Bighorn Country Proposal. (Relevant to other regions of the province as well.)

1. Minister Phillips said that "all" trails will remain. This was also stated for both the Castle Wildland/Provincial Parks, and the Livingston PLUZ created north of it. However, over 95% of the trails in the Castle have been closed, and 74% of the trails in the PLUZ. So what has changed in the actual framework/process to support this promise?
2. Has this government fixed or changed the trail designation process since Castle/Livingston? As users were only informed of changes, but had zero decision making authority on the process - which resulted in a fractured network of trails degrading user enjoyment.
 - a) If the process hasn't changed, why should we expect the outcome to be any different?
3. Jamie Bruha said on a recent Telephone Town Hall that there is a process for designating trails.
 - a) What is it?
 - b) Who had input to it?
 - c) Can we see it?
4. Since it's illegal to ride on non-designated trails the minute a PLUZ comes into effect,
 - a) who is designating the trails?
 - b) what is the process?
 - c) who are the decision makers?
5. Will a map of current trails and a historic trail inventory be provided prior to this proposal coming into effect?

6. We have already had substantial trail closures (Canary Creek etc.) with absolutely zero input to mitigation or rerouting. As the current framework process doesn't notify reasons or ask input, has this process been changed to back up this claim that all trails will remain?
7. In Livingstone, the GoA never released to the public the trail inventory to affected users, nor the expected reduction of their access to recreation. Since we know that AEP has been closing trails during the process, can the government please supply a current list of all the recreational trails in the new PLUZ, for users to see what was on the landscape
 - a) prior to the proposal being introduced to the public.
 - b) at the end of end of the public consultation period.
 - c) at the point a final decision is made
8. What is an illegal trail? How is it defined? How do trails become illegal?
9. Of all of the trails in the Bighorn, what percent are usable by OHVs?
 - a) What percent were created by industry?
 - b) Is there a database of trails you are referring to?
10. I hear a lot about the science that these important decisions are being based on. Can I receive a copy of the science – the studies and reports?
 - a) Science that is based on studies conducted in Alberta.
 - b) Science that is based on studies with relevant parameters.
 - c) Is this information available to all Albertans?

Linear Disturbance

The Minister committed that LF/LD would only be applied in the Castle, Porcupine Hills and Livingstone – not anywhere else in the province. HOWEVER, Linear Disturbance was mentioned briefly on one of the Telephone Town Hall Calls and confirmed at the last Bighorn Steering Committee meeting that it will be applied with the current parameters.

Linear Footprint (LF) or Linear Disturbance (LD) has never been properly explained – please share the government document explaining how science was used to determine LD.

11. Where is the explanation of LF/LD and how is it being applied in this area?

12. Linear Disturbance is an element Alberta Environment & Parks introduced to their decision-making process. It is NOT referenced as a key determinant for regulatory decisions by any other jurisdiction in North America. What roles does it play in this proposal?
13. In Castle/Livingston, a linear footprint (based on road density) was applied after implementation as a threshold for trails. While this footprint isn't proven applicable to trails - will it be deployed here?
14. Is there a threshold designated for linear footprint?
 - a) What is that threshold?
15. In the south no actual roads were reduced to meet this threshold - just 75% of the OHV trails. What is the linear disturbance threshold being set for these areas?
16. What is the actual footprint of the OHV trails and associated facilities in the Bighorn (in km²)?
17. It has been shown the 'seismic line' data layer is obsolete. How many 'models' have this data layer as an input to modeling outputs?
 - a) Please list the wildlife/fisheries and land use models that use this seismic data layer?

Protected Lands

18. There are over 490 Provincial Parks and Protected areas in Alberta, with only 27% of our population visiting those that cost this province 540 million of debt each year – can you provide a cost/benefit analysis of what this park will provide over its current protected status?
19. What is the total protected land area in Alberta including those under federal, provincial, municipal jurisdictions as well as public land trusts and conservancy easements?
20. Is it the intention of the government to find a way for all Albertans to enjoy Bighorn Country, for all Albertans to share the Bighorn region?

Miscellaneous

21. Is it true that the plan is to have hotels and restaurants and other facilities within this new park? Do we know the impact to wildlife and nature from that kind of development?
22. Enforcement is a key issue. What is the documented experience of enforcement agencies over the past 5 years?
23. This proposal was introduced as a means of protecting the headwaters and the water supply for communities falling within the NSRP. What is the current water quality at the boundary of the Proposed Bighorn Country area?
24. How many people have visited the area annually in the past 5 years?
 - a) What activities do they participate in?
 - b) How many people participate in each of those activities?
 - c) Where do they come from?
25. How many people are expected to visit the area annually should the proposal be implemented?
 - a) Where will they come from?