REPORT ON THE STATE OF CONSERVATION OF WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK WORLD HERITAGE SITE (CANADA)

Property ID 256

IN RESPONSE TO:
WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE DECISION 45 COM 7B.22

1 DECEMBER 2024

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- BC Hydro
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Government of Alberta
- Parks Canada
- 11 Indigenous Partners:
    - Salt River First Nation (SRFN)*
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    - Fort Smith Métis Council (FSMC)*
    - Deninu K'ue First Nation (DKFN)
    - Fort Resolution Métis Council (FRMC)*
    - K'atl'odeeche First Nation (KFN)*
    - Hay River Métis Government Council (HRMGC)*
    - Little Red River Cree First Nation (LRRCFN)
    - Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN)
    - Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN)
    - Fort Chipewyan Métis local #125 (FCML)*

*endorsed *Pathway to Working Together - Statement of the Indigenous Caucus of the Cooperative Management Committee on Shared Governance of Wood Buffalo National Park.* Note: the report was also endorsed by Northwest Territory Métis Nation, who are not members of the CMC.

Acronyms

CIWG	Crown Indigenous Working Group
CMC	Cooperative Management Committee
ECCC	Environment and Climate Change Canada
GEER	Governance effectiveness and efficiency review
IAAC	Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
IK	Indigenous Knowledge
IRMP	Integrated Research Monitoring Program
OFA	Operational Framework Agreement
OSM	Oil Sands Monitoring Program
OSPW	Oil sands processed water
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
PAD	Peace-Athabasca Delta
SIR	Science Integrity Review
TISG	Tailored Impact Statement Guideline
UNDA	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
WBNP	Wood Buffalo National Park

Executive Summary of the report

Wood Buffalo National Park is Canada's largest national park, and is home to the largest free-roaming, self-regulating wood bison herd in the world; the only remaining, naturally occurring nesting ground of the whooping crane; the dynamic ecosystem of the Peace-Athabasca Delta (PAD); extensive salt plains; and fine gypsum karst topography. All of these unique and remarkable features contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the world heritage site.

The park is located in the traditional territory of 11 First Nations and Métis peoples of the region, who see the lands and waters of the park as important to their cultural survival, and spans one province and one territory. For some years, Canada has been working with partners to monitor a number of conservation issues facing the park, including some that are impacting aspects of the site's OUV. In response to these threats, Canada created the Wood Buffalo National Park World Heritage Site Action Plan ("Action Plan"), an ambitious, multijurisdictional, long-term plan that follows an adaptive management approach to protecting and maintaining the ecological values of the park, including those related to the site's OUV.

This State of Conservation report responds to the request of the World Heritage Committee in Decision 45 COM 7B.22 (2023) to provide an update on the state of conservation of Wood Buffalo National Park World Heritage Site and Canada's response to recommendations arising from the 2022 Reactive Monitoring Mission. While the focus of the report is on issues related to the OUV of the site, additional information may be provided throughout in recognition of the site's complex nature. The report also includes a progress update on the implementation of the Action Plan (Annex I).

Since the last State of Conservation Report in 2022, significant effort has gone into advancing the Action Plan and to addressing the recommendations of the 2022 Reactive Monitoring Mission, with many notable accomplishments, including:

- Development of an Indigenous-led proposed framework that will provide the foundation for discussions with Parks Canada on a shared governance model for Wood Buffalo National Park;
- Co-development of an Integrated Research and Monitoring Program with agreed upon scientific and Indigenous knowledge indicators that will be used to detect cumulative effects on the Peace-Athabasca Delta and generate information that supports land-use management and regulatory decision-making;
- Development of a Bayesian Belief Network, a 2-Dimensional hydraulic model, flood reports, and an updated digital elevation model, all of which will improve the collective understanding of the influence of hydrology on the Peace-Athabasca Delta ecosystem and the potential risks and benefits of various mitigation options such as strategic flow releases and water control structures, that can be used to inform decision-making about water management; and
- Continued growth of the whooping crane population and enhanced monitoring of the Ronald Lake and Delta wood bison herds.

Simultaneously, work has been ongoing to:

- Monitor potential impacts from oil sands and tailings ponds on the Peace-Athabasca Delta through the Oil Sands Monitoring Program, with an independent expert panel science integrity review and a complementary governance effectiveness and efficiency review of the program initiated in Fall 2024;

- Consider potential federal regulations for the release of oil sands process-affected water (OSPW) and evaluate alternatives through the Crown-Indigenous Working Group, established by Environment and Climate Change Canada in 2021;
- Produce six scientific assessments related to the potential release of treated OSPW, including a human and ecological risk assessment, the findings of which will be published by the Government of Alberta by the end of 2024; and
- Complete or initiate more than 80% of the actions in the Action Plan.

While there has been meaningful progress in implementing the Action Plan and addressing the recommendations of the 2022 Reactive Monitoring Mission, Canada recognizes that there is still much to be done. Central to advancing this work is strengthening relationships with Indigenous partners in the shared governance of Wood Buffalo National Park and management of conservation issues. Also critical to effective decision-making is a shared understanding of the issues and agreement on the actions to be taken to address them. This will be achieved through the gathering of scientific data and Indigenous knowledge in order to build consensus. As the accomplishments highlighted above illustrate, progress is being made in both of these areas which will lay the foundation for future actions to ensure the Outstanding Universal Value of Wood Buffalo National Park is protected for Canada and the World.

Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

Paragraph 6: Appreciates the ongoing work to develop a hydrologic model to understand the flows required to deliver environmental benefits to the PAD, but expresses concern that a functional modelling platform, which can inform decision-making, will not be available before 2024 and that, to date, no operational strategy or protocol for implementing potential water releases or control structures that might be proposed based on the outcomes of the hydrologic model has been agreed;

Response: Action Plan partners continue to work together to understand the hydrology of the Peace-Athabasca Delta, the possible risks and benefits of intentional flow releases, and the potential effectiveness of water control structures and other mitigation measures. Ongoing collection of data has resulted in the creation of tools – such as an updated digital elevation model and 2-D hydraulic model – that will help to inform future decision-making. For more details on progress in hydrological modelling and the status of a decision-making protocol for water releases and control structures, see the responses to Paragraphs 8.2 and 8.4.

Paragraph 7: Reiterates its utmost concern about the lack of progress in addressing the cumulative impacts of industrial developments around the property, the continued expansion of existing oil sands projects without full consideration of the potential impacts on the OUV of the property, the continued absence of an adequate risk assessment for large tailings ponds upstream of the property despite evidence of major risks, including seepage as well as proposals under consideration to allow the release of treated oil sands processed water (OSPW) into the Athabasca River;

Response: The Government of Canada has safeguards in place to ensure the continued protection of the OUV of the property, including ongoing ecological monitoring and rigorous impact assessment processes for proposed projects outside and inside the property. Existing processes ensure that impacts from potential projects on the PAD are effectively assessed and mitigation measures, as required, implemented. For more information related to impact assessments, oils sands and tailings ponds, see responses to Paragraphs 8.3 and 8.6 to 8.10 below.

Paragraph 8: Requests the State Party to implement all recommendations of the 2022 mission to further strengthen the Action Plan and its implementation, including to:

8.1 Strengthen efforts to transition to a genuine partnership with Indigenous rightsholders in the governance and management of the property,

Response: In October 2024, Parks Canada released the Indigenous Stewardship Policy aimed at laying a foundation for equitable, effective, and collaborative stewardship with Indigenous communities. This policy is part of the work being undertaken by Parks Canada to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in accordance with Canada's *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (UNDA), and will result in the co-development of Stewardship Plans for all of the places Parks Canada has a role in administering.

The Indigenous Stewardship Policy articulates a broad approach to supporting Indigenous stewardship through a framework that includes focused work on strengthening governance options within the protected areas Parks Canada has a role in administering. The commitment to transition to "a genuine partnership with Indigenous rightsholders in governance and management" is reflected in Parks Canada's Action Plan Measure #95 in Canada's 5-year Action Plan to implement the objectives of the United

Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Work at the national scale, to develop policy, regulatory and legislative options that recognize and support implementation of Indigenous systems of law and governance (per Action Plan Measure #95) is at the research and analysis stage and will progress through consultation and cooperation with Indigenous partners. As this transition may include legislative amendments to address barriers to shared governance models, it will take several years to progress.

Wood Buffalo National Park is at the vanguard of site-based approaches to this work. Indigenous partners have been actively engaged with Parks Canada in the management of Wood Buffalo National Park via a Cooperative Management Committee first established in 2016. Presently, Indigenous partners are working to develop an Indigenous-led vision of a new governance model for the park, beginning with internal discussions amongst the Indigenous communities. Phase 1 commenced in Spring 2022 with Indigenous-led community consultations and engagement. Phase 2 was completed in 2023-24 and involved Indigenous-led workshops to bring Indigenous governments together to arrive at a consensus on a shared governance framework. In Summer 2024, Indigenous representatives convened a Leaders Gathering to confirm the foundational elements of the proposed framework that will support the transition to a genuine partnership in the shared governance and management of Wood Buffalo National Park, as called for in Decision 45 COM 7B.22. Endorsement from participating nations[1] resulted in a document entitled *Pathway to Working Together - Statement of the Indigenous Caucus of the Cooperative Management Committee on Shared Governance of Wood Buffalo National Park*, which includes:

- A vision statement for shared governance and management of Wood Buffalo National Park.
- Agreed upon principles to guide Indigenous governments as they continue working together, and with respect to their relationships with Canada in the context of shared governance of the park.
- Goals for shared governance and management of the park.

A report summarizing the results of the work of Indigenous partners was shared with Parks Canada on November 14, 2024. Discussions between Indigenous partners and Parks Canada about the specifics of the new proposed shared governance framework, and how it can be implemented in Wood Buffalo National Park, are ongoing. Parks Canada is committed to continuing this critically important work in collaboration with its Indigenous partners at their pace and in the manner they have chosen, in keeping with the UNDRIP.

In the meantime, Parks Canada is working to fulfil the Action Plan commitment to co-develop with Indigenous partners a comprehensive monitoring program through the Integrated Research and Monitoring Program (IRMP). This program will use science and Indigenous knowledge (IK) to detect cumulative effects on the Peace-Athabasca Delta and to generate information that informs land-use management and regulatory decision-making. Parks Canada's approach to this work is guided by commitments to equitable, effective, and collaborative stewardship with Indigenous communities.

The IRMP is well-advanced and in the implementation stage. Current efforts are focused on validation of the science and Indigenous knowledge indicators. It is expected that by 2026, the IRMP will provide updated reporting on the state of conservation of Wood Buffalo National Park against a full suite of agreed upon scientific and Indigenous knowledge indicators. The IRMP will significantly advance the existing ecological integrity monitoring program and results will guide future park management plans and responsibilities under the *Canada National Parks Act.*

To support the work of the IRMP, a field station located in the Peace-Athabasca Delta was identified as a priority by Indigenous partners. It is an important on-the-land space in the advanced stages of

[1] Several Indigenous partners have elected to pursue bilateral relationships with Parks Canada and do not participate in this shared governance visioning work.

construction. Completion is anticipated in the summer of 2025 and the facility should be fully operational by early fall. The field station will be used by Fort Chipewyan-based Indigenous partners to work collaboratively with Parks Canada staff and other government and non-governmental scientists on collaborative monitoring programs and shared priorities. Importantly, it will also provide a physical space for on-the-land activities that support Indigenous stewardship – including cultural learning, knowledge transmission, and opportunities for youth, elders and knowledge holders to work together on mutual priorities. The field station is an example of the adaptive approach within the Action Plan, and of the ongoing collaboration with Indigenous partners.

8.2 Complete hydrodynamic modelling and environmental flows assessment,

Response: Development of the environmental flows framework is underway with the synthesis of western science and Indigenous Science/Knowledge under four key agreed upon "Foundations of Knowledge" to inform decision-making:

- Traditional Values, Activities and Cultural Heritage;
- Ecology;
- Geomorphology, and
- Hydrology.

These Foundations of Knowledge are informing the development of a suite of tools, including hydrologic/hydraulic models and a Bayesian Belief Network[2], which will improve collective understanding of the influence of hydrology on the Peace-Athabasca Delta ecosystem considering the effects of ongoing climate change and human water use/alterations (e.g., flow regulation, water abstractions). These tools will support the evaluation of the effectiveness of various proposed water management actions, thereby supporting decision-making.

Since the last State of Conservation report submitted in February 2022, the collection of field data has continued at the wetlands, lakes and contributing basin scale to inform the development of hydrological/hydraulic models, with a focus on the Peace-Athabasca Delta and the Slave River. Data collected has resulted in the development of a 2-Dimensional hydraulic model used to examine various scenarios for the proposed Dog Camp Water Control Structure to enhance the storage of water within Lakes Claire and Mamawi (see response to Paragraph 8.5 for more details). Work on the 2-D hydraulic model continues, including the filling of technical information gaps in order to expand it to the PAD systems scale, such as acquiring new bathymetric and cross-sectional surveys on the Slave River. This work, in addition to the Bayesian Belief Network, contributes to the suite of tools that support the ongoing development of the environmental flows framework.

8.3 Ensure that no further dam projects on the Peace River are approved, including the proposed Amisk Project, until sufficient evaluation tools are in place to evaluate impacts on the hydrology of the PAD,

Response: Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) has committed to considering the OUV of the park in any federal impact assessment reviews of major hydroelectric projects, where applicable. Projects undergoing a federal impact assessment are issued Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines (TISGs), which outline the specific impact assessment requirements for the proponent. TISGs are prepared in consultation

[2] Bayesian Belief Network is a probabilistic graphical model that represents a set of variables and their conditional dependencies.

and engagement with Indigenous organizations/governments/communities, federal departments, the public, and other interested parties prior to being finalized and posted publicly. The focused and specific nature of the TISGs provide clear and specific information requirements for relevant factors and effects to be included in the impact assessment. Specific requirements to include potential individual and cumulative effects within Wood Buffalo National Park and the PAD can be explicitly required within the TISGs issued to project proponents. Parks Canada will continue to request this for all projects with potential impacts on the OUV of the property.

The impact assessment for the proposed Amisk project has not advanced since 2016. The proposed project's environmental review is effectively on hold until the proponent decides to advance in the regulatory process. In the meantime, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) is conducting assessments of Peace River flows, river ice and delta water conditions, which may be relevant should the project's regulatory review proceed. If the proposed Amisk project moves forward, IAAC will likely amend the terms of reference to assess potential impacts to the OUV. There are no other known projects proposed for the Peace River at this time in the regulatory review phase. Should any future projects be proposed for the Peace River, information derived from hydrological modelling will be available to inform decision-making.

8.4 Urgently establish a sound decision-making mechanism for ecological flow releases.

Response: Parks Canada, the Government of Alberta and BC Hydro are currently focused on the development of a Memorandum of Understanding to enable strategic flow releases from BC Hydro facilities that would enhance naturally occurring ice jam flooding in the Peace-Athabasca Delta. Existing authorities at the federal and provincial level support joint decision-making as to whether intentional flow releases would ecologically benefit the PAD and whether risks to upstream and downstream communities could be mitigated.

However, any decision to use strategic flow releases from upstream dams on the Peace River to enhance naturally occurring ice jam flooding in the Peace-Athabasca Delta cannot be taken without the agreement of Indigenous partners and jurisdictional authorities. Arriving at a consensus on such restoration activities requires a common understanding of the risks and benefits, which can only be achieved once the necessary information has been gathered.

Since the last State of Conservation report in 2022, a steering committee and a technical working group have been working to advance collective understanding of the necessary pre-conditions under which such releases, which could enhance naturally occurring spring ice jam flooding in the PAD, could occur. Current efforts are focused on filling technical information gaps, including the completion of a flood report to enhance understanding of ice jam flooding in the PAD and its benefits to park ecology. Additionally, a flood hazard study for the Garden River community, located directly along the western boundary of WBNP, was launched by the Government of Alberta in 2024. This study will provide critical baseline information about flood risks in this area during open water and ice jam flooding to support emergency response.

Environment and Climate Change Canada is leveraging partnerships with existing federal, provincial and academic expertise and capacity to advance a comprehensive understanding of the physical hydrology of the PAD, particularly floodplain connectivity. An updated digital elevation model (DEM) of the PAD is now available that will be used to inform decision-making about water management in the Peace-Athabasca Delta system.

The Government of Alberta continues to implement the Surface Water Quantity Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River with the objective of managing cumulative water withdrawals from the river. The most recent annual reports for this framework will be released in late 2024.

8.5 Decide, before 2026, on a set of concrete mitigation measures to correct the impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and other alterations to the hydrology of the PAD and agree on operational strategies and interjurisdictional protocols for the implementation of the adopted mitigation measures, together with a sufficient budget for their implementation.

Response: Construction of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam was completed in 1968, fifteen years before Wood Buffalo National Park was inscribed on the World Heritage List. Among the actions outlined in the current Action Plan are activities aimed at identifying options for mitigating impacts related to dam operations. Parks Canada has been working collaboratively with a wide range of partners, including Indigenous partners, to understand the potential for the use of water control structures to restore localized flooding to areas of the PAD. Feasibility studies and design concepts for water control structures, technical and policy work related to the potential use of strategic flow releases, and the development of an environmental flows framework are all being used to assess specific mitigation measures. Progress on these management actions is outlined in the response to Paragraph 8.4 above with additional information below. (See also Annex I for updates on progress related to these initiatives.)

Since the last State of Conservation report, two projects have advanced:

Proposed Big Egg Lake Water Control Structure
The Big Egg Lake Water Control Structure Project was identified by the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) as a project that could restore water levels seasonally to their reserve lands. The proposed location is the east-connection channel between Big Egg Lake and the Athabasca River, within ACFN's Jackfish Reserve (I.R. 201), outside Wood Buffalo National Park. Parks Canada and ACFN, supported by technical expertise from ECCC, collaborated to investigate project feasibility and the detailed design and impact assessment were completed in 2024. The impact assessment is one component that will help to inform a decision by ACFN as to whether the project will proceed. If the project proceeds, the structure would be owned and operated by ACFN.

Proposed Dog Camp Water Control Structure in Wood Buffalo National Park
The Dog Camp Water Control Structure project was identified by Indigenous partners as a means to help restore ecological integrity and cultural way of life in the Mamawi Lake and Lake Claire areas of the Peace-Athabasca Delta. This proposed project aims to improve wetland ecological integrity and enhance access to traditional use areas for the Indigenous communities near Fort Chipewyan, Alberta, within Wood Buffalo National Park. The project has been co-designed with Peace-Athabasca Delta Indigenous partners over the past three years through a structured decision-making process supported by extensive hydrologic modelling with technical support from consultants and ECCC scientists. The impact assessment was completed in 2024 and will help to inform a decision as to whether the project should proceed.

The impact assessment outlines positive environmental and cultural benefits with no significant adverse environmental effects predicted. However, there are several trade-offs, including a permanent impediment to boat passage requiring the use of a cart and winch system, increased flooding risk to cabins in the local area, excavation of an area of high archaeological potential, and risks associated with fish passage during the operation of the structure. While the impact assessment has found that impacts on downstream water levels will be negligible, opposition to this project remains due to concerns

from a downstream Indigenous community. A decision about whether the project will proceed has yet to be made.

8.6 Conduct an independent systematic risk assessment of the tailings ponds of the Alberta Oil Sands region, with a focus on risks to the PAD, before the end of 2024

Response: Since the last State of Conservation report in 2022, funding was provided in 2022-23 and 2023-24 by the Government of Canada in response to a proposal for an Indigenous-led risk assessment of oil sands tailings in the Peace-Athabasca Delta. However, the project did not progress as planned and the funds have since been returned.

The Government of Alberta has the jurisdictional authority and responsibility to ensure regulatory oversight of tailings associated with oil sands development and is pursuing opportunities to assess the risks posed by tailings ponds to the environment. Assessing and managing risk is embedded into Alberta's regulatory and oil sands tailings management systems and the province continues to undertake actions and pursue opportunities to assess the risks posed by tailings ponds. For more information regarding the assessment of risks and impacts related to oils sands and tailings ponds, see responses to Paragraphs 8.7 to 8.9 below

8.7 Re-evaluate and adapt collaborative, systematic, science-based monitoring of oil sands impacts on the Athabasca River and PAD to ensure sufficient parameters, sampling design, and protocols are employed to detect impacts

Response: The Oil Sands Monitoring (OSM) Program is a collaborative, systematic and science-based program that monitors impacts to improve the characterization of the condition of the environment and enhance understanding of the cumulative effects of oil sands development activities on the Athabasca River and PAD, and is jointly led by the governments of Alberta and Canada under a Memorandum of Understanding. It is governed and operationalized through a consensus-based decision-making model, as outlined in the Operational Framework Agreement (OFA), within a multi-stakeholder structure that includes representatives from Indigenous communities in the oil sands region, federal and provincial governments, and the oil sands industry.

As per the OFA for the implementation of the OSM Program, an independent expert panel science integrity review (SIR) and a complementary governance effectiveness and efficiency review (GEER) were initiated in Fall 2024. The SIR will evaluate the scientific integrity of monitoring activities and outcomes supported by the program from 2016 to 2023, including the use of Indigenous knowledge, while the GEER will assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Program's governance system, including focusing on accountability, leadership, decision-making processes, and the integrity of relationships as outlined in the OFA.

Environment and Climate Change Canada and Parks Canada also collaborate on PAD-focused research and monitoring with a particular emphasis on water quality. Work is advancing with communities and within the mandates and governance of existing programs to collaboratively monitor the PAD and adapt and strengthen research and monitoring programs over time.

8.8 Develop, before 2026, a clear, consensus-based strategy consistent with precautionary principles for the reclamation of tailing ponds, including the treatment and disposal of OSPW, which guarantees

protection of the water quality of the Athabasca River and the PAD and avoids any impact on the OUV of the property

Response: It is important to note that there are currently no federal regulations in place to authorize releases of oil sands mining effluent. Environment and Climate Change Canada has established a Crown-Indigenous Working Group (CIWG), under which collaborative work to inform potential federal regulations for release and the evaluation of alternatives to release is being undertaken. Environment and Climate Change Canada released a report on the Assessment of Alternatives to Discharge of Oil Sands Mine Water to the CIWG and interested parties in 2024 and has committed to taking the time necessary to meaningfully consult with Indigenous communities. Federally authorized releases cannot occur until regulations are in place (the federal *Fisheries Act* prohibits releasing deleterious substances into fish-frequented waterbodies).

The Government of Alberta recently completed six scientific assessments under the Oil Sands Mine Water Science Team related to potential release of treated OSPW, including a human and ecological risk assessment. Alberta will publish the findings and associated stakeholder commentary by the end of 2024 and has convened an independent Steering Committee to assess options for safe management of oil sands mine water and reclamation of tailings ponds: Oil Sands Mine Water Steering Committee | Alberta.ca. The committee has invited industry and Indigenous communities to make submissions and meet with them in late 2024.

8.9 Ensure that all major development projects in the PAD watershed, including all oil sands mining extension projects, are subject to federal impact assessments and specifically address potential impacts on the OUV of the property, in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impacts Assessments in a World Heritage context

Response: Existing impact assessment processes ensure that impacts from potential projects on the Peace-Athabasca Delta are effectively assessed and mitigation measures, as required, implemented. While not all major development projects are expected to have impacts on OUV, major projects in the PAD watershed will continue to be assessed in accordance with the relevant IAAC impact assessment processes and would be subject to joint federal-provincial panel reviews. The "Guidance and Toolkit for Impacts Assessments in a World Heritage Context" is considered in developing project-specific assessment guidance. For more detail on the federal impact assessment process, refer to the response to Paragraph 8.3 above.

8.10 Ensure that all impact assessments of other projects in the larger landscape around the property that are not subject to federal impact assessment and that are under the responsibility of the Government of Alberta fully consider the OUV of the property and the concerns of indigenous rightsholders beyond the direct project footprint.

Response: Alberta's environmental assessment process supports environmental protection and sustainable development and includes positive and negative environmental, socio-economic and health impacts.

In addition, Alberta's environmental assessment process predicts environmental, social economic and cultural consequences and develops plans to mitigate impacts. It provides for the involvement of the public, Indigenous communities and government agencies.

8.11 Further strengthen the monitoring of flagship species, in particular the whooping crane and the wood bison

Response: Monitoring of the whooping crane and the wood bison is a foundational component of Parks Canada's long-term ecological monitoring program at Wood Buffalo National Park. Parks Canada has established itself as a leader in the field of conservation of these species and has very robust monitoring, conservation, and protection programs in place. Canada has had a multi-jurisdictional Recovery Strategy in place for the whooping crane since 2007 and one for wood bison since 2018.

Whooping crane breeding activity continues to be monitored annually in partnership with the Canadian Wildlife Service. Both survey flights and satellite imagery are used to detect nesting cranes and monitor the population. Parks Canada works closely with partners to assess the vulnerability of nesting wetlands to climate change, determine impact of predation, weather, and wildfire on nesting success, and to identify suitable critical breeding and migratory habitat. The whooping crane population continues to recover (a total of 92 cranes were counted in May 2024) from its historic low population and currently has a long-term growth rate averaging 4.3%. Nesting range also continues to expand.

Since the 1920s, wood bison in and around the park have been infected with bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis, which poses a potential risk of transmission to disease-free conservation herds in Alberta and the Northwest Territories. The percentage of infected bison has remained relatively consistent since the 1950s. Conservation activities and long-term monitoring for wood bison is advancing through use of innovative technological approaches, including the development of vaccines, diagnostic tests, and genomics-based tools. Parks Canada continues to monitor population size, distribution, productivity and health of wood bison herds in the park using aerial and ground surveys. Monitoring of habitat and the use of movement corridors provides essential information to understand the potential for contact between the diseased Peace-Athabasca Delta subpopulation within the park, and the Ronald Lake bison herd in Alberta.

Wood Buffalo National Park, in collaboration with the Government of Alberta and Indigenous partners, is taking considerable effort to monitor and prevent contact between the disease-free Ronald Lake herd and the diseased Delta herd. In addition to regular surveillance flights, WBNP has created a "geo-fence". This geospatial tool alerts staff immediately when collared animals move past a pre-established invisible boundary. The Government of Alberta also plans to implement geo-fencing to monitor the movement of the Ronald Lake herd. Both jurisdictions are working together to share information and keep nearby Indigenous partners informed about herd movements. Since beginning active surveillance, the shortest observed distance between the two herds was 20 km in February 2024.

8.12 Continue efforts to create a buffer zone under the World Heritage Convention around the property.

Response: In recent years, there has been significant expansion of protected areas outside of the park boundary which has, in effect, established a substantial buffer zone around the property (see Fig 1).

While the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for Wood Buffalo National Park suggests that "The size of the park allows for the protection of entire ecosystems and the ecosystem features that are the basis for the park's Outstanding Universal Value," the establishment of protected areas adjacent to the park constitutes an added layer of protection for the property's OUV through provision of significant landscape buffers and connectivity to the property. Together, these provincially designated protected areas, along with Wood Buffalo National Park, comprise over 60 million hectares (61,432 km^2) of protected area lands. This constitutes the largest, contiguous, formally protected area of boreal forest in the world – a globally significant achievement that supports landscape connectivity for species and

ecosystems, contributes to the maintenance of the ecological integrity of the park, and provides improved protection for lands and species on which Indigenous peoples depend. Parks Canada remains confident that the size of the park and the additional protected areas provide for the appropriate long-term protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

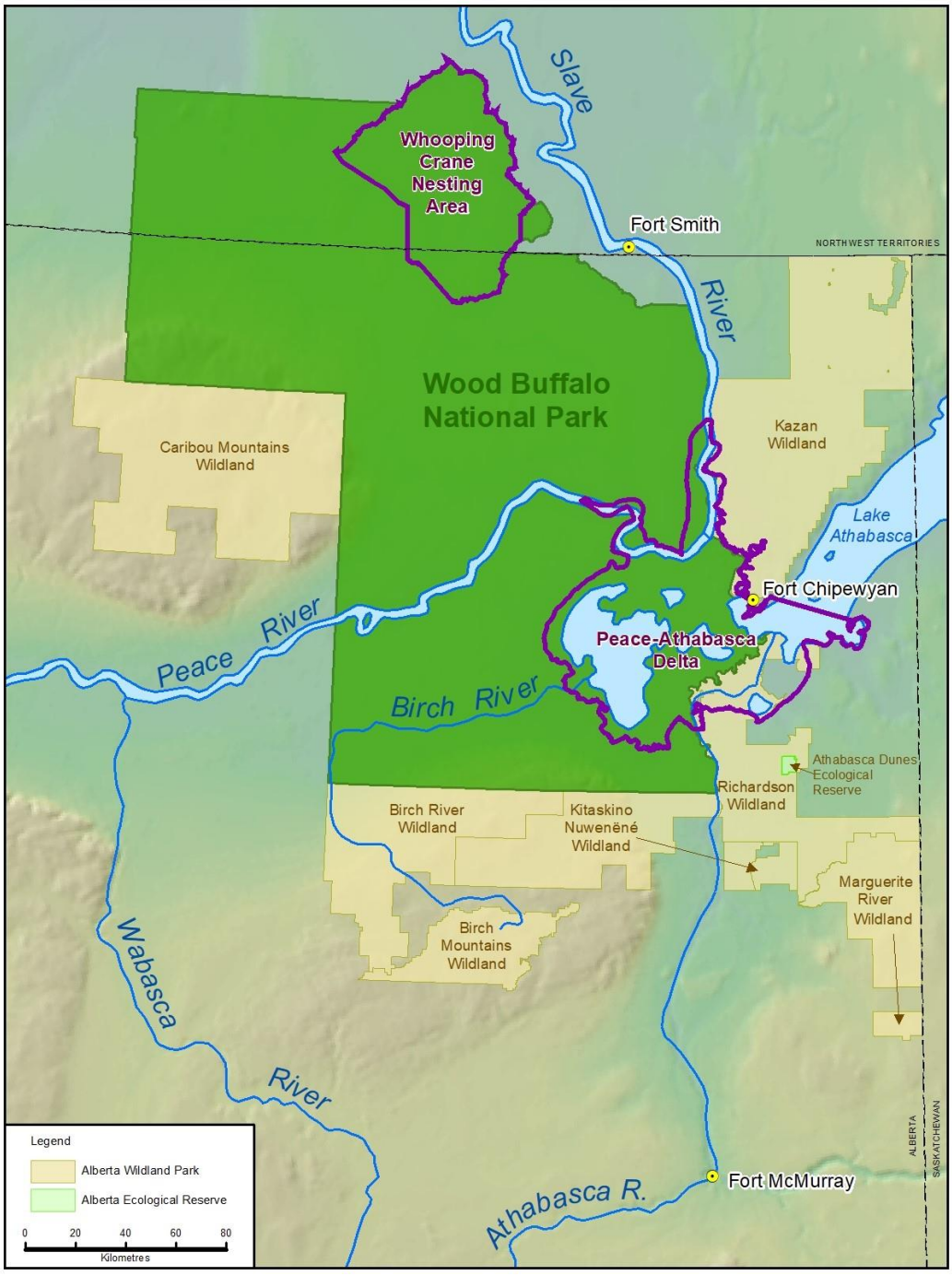

Fig 1: Provincially designated protected areas adjacent to Wood Buffalo National Park

8.13 Revise the 10-year Management Plan based on an agreed Indigenous-led vision for a shared governance model for Wood Buffalo National Park and integrating strategies to address the key conservation concerns of the property.

Response: Parks Canada remains committed to revising the Management Plan for Wood Buffalo National Park based on an agreed upon Indigenous-led vision for a shared governance model and integrating strategies to address the key conservation concerns of the property. The management planning process will be undertaken in a manner consistent with Canada's commitment to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and be accompanied by an Indigenous Stewardship Plan developed in accordance with Parks Canada's *Indigenous Stewardship Policy*. In addition, work moving forward on the Management Plan will reflect the work summarized in the report entitled *Pathway to Working Together - Statement of the Indigenous Caucus of the Cooperative Management Committee on Shared Governance of Wood Buffalo National Park*, and further described in the response to Paragraph 8.1 above.

Development of a revised Management Plan can only begin once the process to develop a shared governance model is complete and in conjunction with the development of an Indigenous Stewardship Plan, presenting a key opportunity to harmonize management direction with the work of the Action Plan. While this will likely happen after 2026, collaboration with Indigenous partners to identify key strategies and priorities for managing and governing the site is ongoing, in accordance with an adaptive management approach.

8.14 Further streamline the implementation of the Action Plan, including by improving inter-agency coordination, defining clear impact indicators, ensuring long-term and multiannual support and funding for capacity-building for indigenous rightsholders to enable full and effective participation, and ensuring that appropriate budget allocations are made for its implementation

Response: Parks Canada continues to work closely with all partners on the Action Plan with a view to advancing shared priorities. There has been significant inter-agency coordination related to management of the site and implementation of the Action Plan, as has been demonstrated throughout this report, particularly in the responses to Paragraphs 8.1, 8.4, 8.5, 8.7, and 8.11.

Parks Canada continues to explore financial resourcing opportunities to support the continued implementation of the Action Plan as a matter of priority, including support and funding for capacity-building for Indigenous partners.

Paragraph 9: Also notes the recommendation of the mission not to inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger at this stage to allow more time to implement the Action Plan updated with the above recommendations and also notes that a new Reactive Monitoring mission in 2026 would allow to assess whether sufficient progress has been made to reverse the current downward trends and avert further degradation of the OUV of the property, and whether the property meets the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger;

Response: Parks Canada is committed to the on-going implementation of the Action Plan and will continue to advance shared priorities with all partners. While more than 80% of the measures in the plan are now either completed or underway, it is respectfully suggested that a reactive monitoring mission in 2027 would provide more time to evaluate the results being achieved from the actions taken. More details on the progress towards implementing the Action Plan can be found in Annex I.

Paragraph 10: Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2024**, an updated Action Plan taking into account the recommendations of the 2022 mission.

Response: Parks Canada remains committed to working with all partners to advance the implementation of the Action Plan and to adjusting the program of work in response to the 2023 Decision (45 COM 7B.22) of the World Heritage Committee in a manner that respects the rights of Indigenous partners as well as the interplay of implicated jurisdictions. Parks Canada will continue to consider the 2022 mission recommendations in this context as the approach to implementation of the Action Plan evolves in accordance with an adaptive management approach to addressing conservation issues in Wood Buffalo National Park.

Paragraph 11: *Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by **1 December 2024** an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the recommendations of the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission, including the systematic risk assessment of the tailing ponds in the Alberta Oil Sands region, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session.*

Canada's Response to Paragraph 11: This updated State of Conservation Report has been prepared and submitted to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, and includes an update on work related to the potential risks of tailings ponds to the Peace-Athabasca Delta.

Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value

There are no other current conservation issues identified by the State Party which may affect the property's OUV at this time.

In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.

There are no further potential developments that may affect the Outstanding Universal Value for this World Heritage property.

Public access to the state of conservation report

The State Party authorizes the World Heritage Centre to make this report public on its website.

Signature of the Authority

Nadine Spence

Vice-President, Indigenous Affairs and Cultural Heritage Directorate, Parks Canada and Head of World Heritage Delegation for Canada

Annex I: Update on Implementation of the Wood Buffalo Action Plan

The Wood Buffalo National Park World Heritage Site Action Plan was developed in 2019, the product of collaboration between Indigenous nations and communities, provincial and territorial governments, the Government of Canada, and other stakeholders aimed at addressing the complex conservation challenges facing Wood Buffalo National Park. The Action Plan is a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional response to protect and maintain the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and other ecological values associated with the world heritage property. Since 2019, the Government of Canada has made an unprecedented investment of over $87 million to implement federal commitments under the Action Plan. To date, over 80% of the Action Plan measures are either completed or underway, with work to continue until 2026 and beyond.

The World Heritage Committee has acknowledged that important progress has been made in the implementation of the Action Plan. The committee has also acknowledged that time is needed to both implement and to demonstrate the effectiveness of actions designed to mitigate pressing issues that affect traditional Indigenous use and the ecological integrity of the park. Similarly, the report of the Reactive Monitoring Mission (2022) acknowledged that given the long-term nature of ecological change, it will take many years to see changes in the condition and trend of the OUV as a result of restorative efforts being undertaken today.

An update on implemation of the Action Plan is presented both in the narrative component of the main report on the preceding pages and in this Annex. Although not reported on in this Annex, Canada's response to the 2022 Reactive Monitoring Mission recommendations includes actions under parallel programs, including the Oil Sands Monitoring Program, as they are all part of Canada's response to the Committee's 2023 decision and of our overall approach to managing the OUV of the site.

At the time of writing, 83% of the 137 identified actions detailed in the Action Plan are either completed or underway. This includes actions that are fully completed or largely completed with some elements on-going, as well as actions that are underway. Three (3%) of actions have been delayed. A further 14% of actions are "not due yet", meaning that either precursor actions are required for these to commence, or they are not due to start yet according to established timelines in the Action Plan.

Action Plan Implementation Progress – Summary			
Completed Implementation is completed or initial implementation is completed with part of the action on-going.	**Underway** Implementation is underway and progress is being made.	**Not Started** Implementation has been delayed.	**Not Due Yet** Implementation is not yet due to begin.
82/137 = 60%	31/137 = 23%	4/137 = 3%	20/137 = 14%

ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	PROGRESS @ December 1, 2024	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE, AS PER ACTION PLAN
THEME: Strengthening Indigenous Partnerships with Wood Buffalo National Park (IP)				
OUTCOME: Improved relationships between Wood Buffalo National Park and its Indigenous partners results in improved, cooperative management of the park that meets the interests of all parties.				
IP1: CMC will identify core areas of immediate interest regarding the management of the site, and adjust its process as required to effectively address these areas of interest.	PCA	Indigenous partners	Completed	2019
IP2: CMC will develop and adopt policies to meet the interests of all parties, in particular related to the staffing of Indigenous persons and a contracting policy to ensure that opportunities for Indigenous persons are enhanced.	PCA	Indigenous partners	Completed	2019
IP3: Increase capacity for park management and staffing in Fort Chipewyan, to respond to the pressures facing the PAD.	PCA		Completed	2019
IP4: Develop and implement a training program for Wood Buffalo National Park staff designed to improve the evolving relationship with Indigenous communities.	PCA		Completed	2020
IP5: Continue engagement through bilateral processes between First Nations and Métis groups where these have been established.	Indigenous partners	PCA	Completed (on-going)	Ongoing
IP6: Co-develop (with Indigenous groups) options for enhancing the profile of Indigenous content in Wood Buffalo National Park and for recognizing Indigenous contributions to Wood Buffalo National Park.	Indigenous partners	PCA	Completed (on-going)	Ongoing
THEME: Environmental Assessment (EA)				
OUTCOME: Ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of the property is considered in environmental assessments where potential specific or cumulative impacts may occur on the OUV of Wood Buffalo National Park, in particular in the PAD.				
EA1: Refer the proposed Amisk Hydroelectric Project to an independent review panel.	IAAC		Completed	2016
EA2: Amend Guidelines for the Preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Amisk Hydroelectric Project to direct consideration of potential effects of the project on the OUV of the park, including the PAD.	IAAC		Not Yet Due	2020
EA3: Conduct an SEA on the potential of all developments to impact the OUV of the Wood Buffalo National Park World Heritage Site and submit to the World Heritage Centre.	PCA		Completed	2018
EA4: Submit the SEA to the Joint Review Panel for the Teck Frontier Oil Sands Mine Project for consideration.	IAAC	PCA	Completed	2018
EA5: Amend the Joint Review Panel Agreement for Teck Frontier to mandate the Panel to consider and report on the potential environmental and cumulative effects of the project on the OUV of the World Heritage Site, including the PAD.	IAAC, AER		Completed	2017

ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	PROGRESS @ December 1, 2024	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE, AS PER ACTION PLAN
EA6: Evaluate the potential effects of the Frontier Project on the OUV of the park and provide assessment to the Teck Frontier Joint Review Panel for its consideration in the environmental assessment.	IAAC		Completed	2018
EA7: Ensure that all current and future environmental assessment reviews conducted pursuant to federal legislation consider the specific and cumulative impacts on the OUV of Wood Buffalo National Park and are aligned with the IUCN World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment and World Heritage, to the extent possible.	IAAC	PCA	Underway	2023, + ongoing
Goal: Continue to work with Indigenous communities and stakeholders on Lower Athabasca Region environmental management frameworks.				
EA8: Continue to work with Indigenous communities and stakeholders on the Aboriginal navigation component of the Alberta's Lower Athabasca Region Surface Water Quantity Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River. This will include further development of the Aboriginal Navigation Index.	AB		Underway	2020
EA9: Develop a work plan to address ecological knowledge gaps as identified in the Lower Athabasca Region Surface Water Quantity Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River.	AB		Completed	2020
EA10: Conduct an analysis of Oil Sands Monitoring Program water quality stations and parameters in the oil sands region and including, where applicable, the PAD to assess changes in water quality relative to limits of change and considering Indigenous community-based monitoring. This would be conducted for those elements that fall within the programs' scope and mandate and respecting the program's governance structure.	AB/ECCC		Underway	2020
EA11: Integrate the findings of Oil Sands Water Quality analysis to inform updates to the Surface Water Quality Management Framework.	AB	ECCC, OSM	Underway	2020
EA12: Complete development of a cumulative effects environmental monitoring framework for the Oil Sands Monitoring Program under the programs' scope, mandate and governance structure	AB/ECCC	OSM	Underway	2023
THEME: Conservation Area Connectivity (CC)				
OUTCOMES: Improved connectivity for wildlife and supporting processes; Increased ecological integrity and resiliency of the OUV of Wood Buffalo National Park World Heritage Site; Improved connectivity for the protection and exercise of Aboriginal and treaty rights; Strengthened relationships with Indigenous partners through respectful application of science-based and Indigenous Knowledge to conservation planning and management.				
Goal: Within individual jurisdictions, establish buffer zones around Wood Buffalo National Park through the establishment of adjacent protected and conserved areas.				
CC1: Establish five new and expanded conservation areas under the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan, adjacent to Wood Buffalo National Park, to increase functional connectivity for OUV within Wood Buffalo NP.	AB		Completed	2018
CC2: Develop cooperative management arrangements with Indigenous communities and organizations to help support traditional land use and cultural values, including the exercise of rights recognized under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, for the five new and expanded wildland provincial parks under the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan.	AB		Underway	2020

ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	PROGRESS @ December 1, 2024	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE, AS PER ACTION PLAN
CC3: Advance (through discussions with Indigenous communities and stakeholders) the proposal for an additional conservation area on the land base known as the Biodiversity Stewardship Area immediately south of Wood Buffalo National Park.	AB		Completed	2018
CC4: Following months of collaborative discussions with Indigenous groups, industry and other stakeholders, the Government of Alberta to consult on the creation of the Biodiversity Stewardship Area, which will designate the area as a wildland provincial park (protected area) from a multiple use land base with industrial tenure. The proposed protected area is about 166,110 hectares located directly south of Wood Buffalo National Park.	AB		Completed	2019
CC5: Develop cooperative management arrangements with Indigenous communities for management of the BSA that supports Wood Buffalo National Park OUV (e.g., bison and watershed protection), as well as Indigenous cultural and traditional values, including the exercise of rights recognized under section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982.	AB		Underway	2020
CC6: Integrate an Indigenous Guardian Program to support Indigenous Stewardship of the five new and expanded conservation areas under the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan, as well as the Biodiversity Stewardship Area.	AB		Underway	2023
CC7: Advance conservation priorities under “Healthy Lands, Healthy People: Government of Northwest Territories: Priorities for Advancement of Conservation Network Planning – 2016 – 2021”.	NWT		Completed	Ongoing
CC8: Advance regional land use planning processes in areas surrounding Wood Buffalo National Park.	AB, NWT		Completed (on-going)	2023
CC9: Enhance communication and explore opportunities for closer collaboration particularly under the Pathway to Canada Target 1 initiative.	Canada, AB, NWT		Completed	2023
CC10: In association with the Pathway to Canada Target 1 support efforts to establish new tools for conservation that contribute to conservation area connectivity in the Wood Buffalo National Park region.	Canada, AB, NWT		Completed	2023
CC11: Consolidate Indigenous and scientific information on the habitat and dispersal requirements for key species through extensive literature review and community led workshops.	PCA		Completed	2019
Goal: Determine the ecological functional needs of the elements of OUV of Wood Buffalo National Parkas they relate to conservation area connectivity.				
CC12: Acquire existing data related to species occurrence and remote sensing for spatial analysis and mapping.	PCA		Completed	2019
CC13: Identify and confirm information gaps and identify plans to fill these gaps.	PCA		Completed	2019
CC14: Conduct analysis of assembled data and apply habitat and movement information acquired during workshops to develop a series of species-specific, landscape-scale, habitat suitability and connectivity maps.	PCA		Completed	2020
CC15: Peer review and gather feedback on spatial models. Peer review will include follow-up workshops to identify accuracy, strengths and weaknesses of resulting maps.	PCA		Underway	2020

ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	PROGRESS @ December 1, 2024	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE, AS PER ACTION PLAN
CC16: Generate a series of map packages for subsequent communications and planning purposes that describe the results of the modelling process and highlight habitat and movement needs for key species throughout the Wood Buffalo National Park region.	PCA		Underway	2020
Goal: Identify potential gaps necessary for the maintenance of OUV that can guide future conservation planning and/or management.				
CC17: Conduct workshop on spatial priorities for conservation including objectives for a gap analysis on areas in and adjacent to Wood Buffalo National Park.	PCA		Not Started	2020
CC18: Undertake landscape gap analysis and spatial conservation prioritization exercise using current methods and tools (i.e., Marxan).	PCA		Not Started	2020
CC19: Produce maps and communication products that provide results of gap analysis and present design options for contributing to a regional network of protected and conserved areas, including a buffer zone adjacent to Wood Buffalo National Park.	PCA		Not Started	2020
THEME: Tailings Pond Risk Assessment (TP)				
OUTCOME: Tailings ponds are constructed, managed and maintained to limit impacts to the Athabasca River, and new and legacy tailings volumes are reclaimed in a timely manner, so that the risk of tailings ponds to the PAD is minimized.				
TP1: Ongoing implementation of the Tailings Management Framework to promote progressive reclamation, accelerate tailings treatment and improve the water management system. Continue to support existing forums for including indigenous perspectives on advancement of this work. Consider results of the tailings risk assessment study (TP2) in future review and amendment of the Tailings Management Framework and Directive 085.	AB		Completed	On-going
TP2: Pursue a systematic tailings risk assessment by collaborating with Indigenous peoples, national/international experts, and industry to develop a landscape model considering tailings reclamation, hydrology, withdrawals, climate change, seepage, and cumulative effects. This is within the scope of the Oil Sands Monitoring Program and would be conducted through existing work planning and governance processes.	AB	ECCC, OSM	Underway	2022
TP3: Amend the Water Ministerial Regulation, ensuring major water management infrastructure and tailings dams are safe.	AB		Completed	2019
TP4: Provide regulatory oversight to ensure tailings dams are safe and managed appropriately by operators.	AB		Completed	2023
TP5: Minimize fluid tailings accumulation by ensuring that fluid tailings are treated and reclaimed progressively during the life of a project and all fluid tailings associated with a project are ready to reclaim within 10 years of end of the mine life of that project. Supported through ongoing work undertaken as part of tailings management implementation.	AB		Completed	2023
TP6: Establish project-specific target, triggers and limit for new fluid tailings. Supported through ongoing work undertaken as part of tailings management implementation.	AB		Completed	2023
TP7: Develop plans to reduce legacy tailing volumes to a ready-to-reclaim state by end of mine life.	AB		Completed	2023

ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	PROGRESS @ December 1, 2024	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE, AS PER ACTION PLAN
TP8: Tailings ponds are designed, constructed, operated, maintained, and decommissioned safely. Supported through ongoing work undertaken as part of tailings management implementation.	AB		Completed (on-going)	2023
TP9: Conduct ambient environmental monitoring to inform a risk assessment on changes to environmental condition.	AB	OSM, ECCC	Completed (on-going)	On-going
TP10: Establish Oil Sands Process Affected Water Science Team to provide credible scientific information to inform government and regulatory bodies on potential process water treatment and release. Create additional Science Teams as needed to support implementation of the Tailings Management Framework.	AB		Completed	2020
THEME: Environmental Flows and Hydrology (EFH)				
OUTCOMES: **Ecological and Hydrological Integrity** – Water quantity improvements, including variability, sustain ecological functioning and integrity of the PAD to support the OUV. **Exercise of Aboriginal and treaty rights** – Water quantity improvements sustain healthy and abundant traditional resources and Indigenous ways of life in the PAD. **Informed Decision-Making** – Improved baseline data/knowledge and comprehensive environmental flows assessments inform decision-making related to the ecological and hydrological integrity of the PAD.				
Goal: To establish renewed and effective partnerships through a cross-jurisdictional and Indigenous governance team to guide and inform management actions toward achieving the desired hydrology outcomes of the PAD and Wood Buffalo National Park.				
EFH1: Convene and resource an FPTI Committee and Secretariat to oversee implementation of the EFH portion of the Wood Buffalo National Park Action Plan.	ECCC		Completed (on-going)	2020
EFH2: Develop FPTI Committee Terms of Reference	ECCC		Discontinued	2019
EFH3: Establish and task project teams to implement key actions (e.g., structural alternatives project team; target/objective-setting) outlined for the EFH theme. Note that timelines will be variable as the needs for various project teams change.	ECCC		Completed	2023
EFH4: Establish clear lines of communication and linkages to existing processes such as the Mackenzie River Basin Board, Wood Buffalo NP Cooperative Management Committee, Alberta–NWT Bilateral Management Committee, Alberta Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, etc.	ECCC		Completed	2019
EFH5: Implement a progress reporting mechanism to Federal, Provincial, Territorial, and Indigenous governments.	ECCC		Completed	2020
EFH6: Communicate the findings of assessments, research, and modelling with stakeholders and Indigenous communities.	ECCC		Completed	2023
Goal: Identify and describe the areas and conditions where changes to water quantity would support the achievement of the Outcomes for ecological and hydrological integrity & exercise of Aboriginal and treaty rights.				

ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	PROGRESS @ December 1, 2024	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE, AS PER ACTION PLAN
EFH7: Document priority locations in the PAD (Figure 6) where ecological integrity is impacted and intervention is required, as well as areas from currently documented sites of navigational and/or cultural importance in the PAD and identify which of these is appropriate for early action and monitoring for trends.	PCA, Indigenous Partners		Completed	2019
EFH8: Identify the key objectives for the selected early action locations.	PCA, Indigenous Partners		Completed	2019
EFH9: Initiate feasibility studies to assess what actions could be implemented to make progress toward these objectives, as described in actions EFH 32-33 (artificial ice dam) and EFH 56-57 (control structures).	PCA, Indigenous Partners		Completed	2019
EFH10: Undertake Indigenous use interviews to identify priority navigation routes and pinch points for all communities that travel within Wood Buffalo National Park for the exercise of Aboriginal and treaty rights, where not currently documented.	PCA, Indigenous Partners		Completed	2022
EFH11: Undertake Indigenous use interviews to identify areas and timing of key contemporary and historic cultural importance including, but not limited to, medicine, hunting, fishing, gathering, spiritual and cultural practice.	PCA, Indigenous Partners		Completed	2022
EFH12: Identify key areas of Wood Buffalo National Park where water quantity changes are required to restore ecological integrity.	PCA, Indigenous Partners		Completed	2020
EFH13: Document the information from all above activities and summarize the specific objectives in a final report(s).	PCA		Completed	2022
EFH14: Over time, using adaptive management (see section 7.1.2 in the SEA), learn through action, monitoring, and modelling what water quantity change supports achievement of these objectives.	FPTI CTTE		Not Due Yet	2023, ongoing
Goal: Set SMART water quantity targets and indicators toward achieving the objectives identified above.				
EFH15: Assess use of existing indicators developed with Indigenous expertise, such as by the Mackenzie River Basin Board, the NREI and NRBS, those in place in Wood Buffalo National Park through Parks Canada and Community-Based Monitoring programs.	ECCC		Completed	2019
EFH16: Identify gaps in knowledge for indicators and targets and develop a plan to address these gaps.	ECCC, PCA		Completed	2019
EFH17: In conjunction with 'objectives' interviews, conduct interviews of elders and land users to inform development of Indigenous SMART targets and rights-based indicators for Indigenous use objectives identified above (e.g., abundance of harvested species and/or traditional use plants; navigability of priority routes).	PCA, Indigenous Partners		Completed (on-going)	2022

ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	PROGRESS @ December 1, 2024	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE, AS PER ACTION PLAN
EFH18: Informed by the objectives and baseline hydrological conditions identified below, develop SMART targets (or target ranges or thresholds) and indicators to assess: • progress toward intermittent high elevation recharge of the PAD's perched basins (including key sites of Indigenous cultural importance within these perched basins, if applicable) • progress toward low elevation recharge and connectivity (including key sites of Indigenous cultural importance) • navigability of seasonal priority routes.	PCA		Not Due Yet	2023
EFH19: Make the targets and indicators available via the Knowledge Hub (see EFH 69-75), with regular reporting.	PCA, Indigenous Partners		Not Due Yet	2023
Goal: Establish a monitoring regime that tracks the trend of indicators identified above across the extent of Wood Buffalo National Park and the PAD and over time that evaluates the effectiveness of management actions, building on existing monitoring programs where possible.				
EFH20: Assess and inventory the historic and ongoing monitoring within Wood Buffalo National Park.	ECCC, PCA	CBM	Completed	2019
EFH21: In coordination with actions taken pursuant to Monitoring and Science theme, identify gaps in the types and location of monitoring within Wood Buffalo National Park required to support monitoring of: a. indicators, including navigability; b. baseline / reference parameters; c. parameters required for model operation and validation, and d. water management actions.	FPTI CTTE		Underway	2023
EFH22: Make monitoring data available, to local communities and decision-makers in a timely and transparent manner.	FPTI CTTE		Underway	2023
Goal: Establish protocols for, and identify circumstances under which, a strategic release of water from the Williston Reservoir behind the W.A.C. Bennett Dam could enhance an ice jam flood event within Wood Buffalo National Park to encourage flooding of the PAD, including its perched basins, while minimizing unwanted upstream and downstream risks.				
EFH23: Create a protocol for a proposal from the Government of Alberta for a test flow (a release of water from the W.A.C. Bennett Dam) to influence an ice jam event in the PAD similar to the 1996 request.	AB, BC, BC Hydro		Underway	2020
EFH24: Assemble currently available data and information that could indicate if a test flow has a reasonable chance of being successful while minimizing the risk of unintended negative consequences.	AB, BC, BC Hydro		Completed (on-going)	2019
EFH25: Identify gaps in knowledge, review assembled information and confirm gaps using a workshop format, and develop plans to fill knowledge gaps	AB, BC, BC Hydro		Completed (on-going)	2019
EFH26: Communicate with all stakeholders about management actions within the PAD System to ensure risks are understood and acceptable.	AB, BC, BC Hydro		Underway	2021

ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	PROGRESS @ December 1, 2024	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE, AS PER ACTION PLAN
EFH27: Implement the protocol as opportunities arise, including water release, if supported.	AB, BC, BC Hydro		Not Due Yet	2023 (after above steps completed)
EFH28: For each particular test flow, establish assessment criteria and appropriate monitoring.	AB, BC, BC Hydro		Not Due Yet	2023 (after above steps completed)
EFH29: Conduct analysis, modelling, and monitoring related to addressing knowledge gaps with the purpose of identifying more specific parameters that could be used to inform Alberta's request for a test flow release.	AB, BC, BC Hydro		Not Due Yet	2021, and ongoing
EFH30: Update the protocol for a request from Alberta for a test flow release to influence an ice jam event in the PAD with more specific parameters, or update based on lessons learned from any subsequent ice jams and/or test flows.	AB, BC, BC Hydro		Not Due Yet	2022, and ongoing
Goal: To enhance spring flooding using artificial ice damming within Wood Buffalo National Park.				
EFH31: Establish ice dam project team.	PCA, Indigenous Partners		Completed	2020
EFH32: Review past attempt to create an ice dam and related recommendations, and confirm one or more locations where an ice dam(s) could support the desired outcomes	Project team		Completed	2020
EFH33: Establish goals and objectives and develop a plan (i.e., Terms of Reference) to install an ice dam(s) to meet goals and objectives.	Project team		Discontinued	Discontinued
EFH34: Obtain required equipment (spray ice pump(s), monitoring equipment, etc.), establish field team to implement plan.				
EFH35: Implement plan (given necessary environmental pre-conditions are met).				
EFH36: Monitor / document implementation and results, assess results against objectives, refine plan for implementation in future years. Assess the potential for ice dams to support improved ecological and hydrological integrity in other parts of the PAD.				
Goal: To enhance monitoring and to improve the assessment of current and future water quantity conditions in the Peace and Athabasca River Basins.				
EFH37: Assess the current state of knowledge and monitoring within the PAD.	ECCC		Completed	2019
EFH38: Assess the current state of knowledge and monitoring within the Peace and Athabasca River Basins.	FPTI CTTE		Underway	2020
EFH39: Develop a common understanding of the complex hydrological function of the Peace and Athabasca River Basins and the PAD.	FPTI CTTE		Underway	2020
EFH40: Conduct a water balance assessment of the Athabasca and Peace River basins.	FPTI CTTE		Completed	2020

ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	PROGRESS @ December 1, 2024	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE, AS PER ACTION PLAN
EFH41: Determine the appropriate reference time point and scale to define baseline(s) conditions, including: pre-development, present conditions, naturalized.	FPTI CTTE		Completed	2020
EFH42: Determine if appropriate baseline indicators are being monitored and identify gaps.	FPTI CTTE		Underway	2020
EFH43: Develop plan to gather information to fill gaps in western and Indigenous Knowledge.	FPTI CTTE		Underway	2020
EFH44: Undertake elder interviews (in conjunction with other interviews) to inform the pre-regulation and pre-development state of hydrology within the Peace–Athabasca River Basins and Delta.	Indigenous Partners		Underway	2020
EFH45: Ensure identified hydrological indicators are being monitored at appropriate spatial and temporal scale. Integrate with target and indicator monitoring toward objectives wherever possible.	FPTI CTTE		Completed (on-going)	2022
EFH46: Communicate findings from baseline assessment to modelling work and to decision-makers to inform decisions related to future development or management action.	FPTI CTTE		Completed (on-going)	2023
EFH47: Periodically review and update baseline(s) as information becomes available and share results.	FPTI CTTE		Not Due Yet	2025, and ongoing
Goal: To identify, modify and, if necessary, produce environmental flows assessment models that incorporate state-of-the-art understanding of localized effects of the past, ongoing, and projected climate changes, to inform future and ongoing management actions that could impact Wood Buffalo National Park.				
EFH48: Hold a workshop to facilitate a common understanding of the influence of oil sands withdrawals on Indigenous navigability.	ECCC, AB, MCFN		Not Started	2019
EFH49: Inventory and assemble relevant currently available hydrological and geomorphological data, existing models (e.g., Athabasca River Basin Initiative and ongoing work under LARP for the Athabasca River, AEP forecast model of the Peace River, Mackenzie River Basin Hydraulic Model, data from Community-Based Monitoring) and information for the Peace and Athabasca Rivers and tributaries and include this inventory (and data, as appropriate) in the knowledge hub.	ECCC		Completed	2019
EFH50: Hold a workshop(s) with science-based and Indigenous Knowledge experts to scope the variables and data required to produce: (1) a simplified (or geographically restricted) model(s) with existing data to predict and understand the effects of small-scale management options being considered. (2) a holistic, basin-wide, multi-jurisdictional environmental flows model.	ECCC		Underway	2019
EFH51: Review existing models and modelling results to identify options to achieve the identified objectives for Indigenous navigability and ecological outcomes in Wood Buffalo National Park.	FPTI CTTE		Completed	2020
EFH52: Identify gaps and undertake a plan to address these gaps, including potential field studies, and develop finer-scale climate change scenarios for the longer-term holistic model, as requested in Recommendation 3.	ECCC		Not Due Yet	2023

ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	PROGRESS @ December 1, 2024	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE, AS PER ACTION PLAN
EFH53: Develop a holistic, basin-wide, multi-jurisdictional model to the highest international standards to understand hydrological, ecological, and Indigenous use relationships in light of current and future climate change and cumulative effects of withdrawals and regulation.	FPTI CTTE		Underway	2023
EFH54: Make the model(s) and requisite data available to inform future management actions or decisions in the Mackenzie basin that could impede or support the achievement of the PAD objectives and outcomes.	FPTI CTTE		Not Started	2025
EFH55: Update the model framework as data become available through study and management actions and share results.	FPTI CTTE		Not Due Yet	2025, and ongoing
Goal: Strategically placed short- and/or long-term water management control structure(s) within the PAD to create a local hydrological regime that supports the ecological functioning and Indigenous use in identified target areas.				
EFH56: Assemble and review overview of the existing data and information related to past, current, or potential control structures in the PAD.	FPTI CTTE		Completed	2019
EFH57: Obtain new information related to possible short-term or small-scale options to improve the hydrological regime in the PAD.	FPTI CTTE		Completed	2019
EFH58: Pending feasibility assessment results and consultation with local communities, select the most appropriate action and complete the full design for one or more pilot control structures. • Determine appropriate Indigenous and hydro-ecological indicators and monitor for effects of the control structure(s) • Learning from monitoring and implementation results, adjust timing and length of installation and/or site of installation	FPTI CTTE		Completed	2020
EFH59: Install one or more pilot control structures and/or repair existing weirs, as designed.	PCA, AB		Not Due Yet	2023
EFH60: Monitor and adapt installation as required to progress toward objectives.	FPTI CTTE		Not Due Yet	2023
EFH61: Identify remaining gaps in knowledge, including linkages between PAD with current or future structural scenarios, varying flow input, and impacts upstream and downstream.	FPTI CTTE		Underway	2021
EFH62: Longer-term structural options will be assessed in the cumulative framework to test interactions with other management options. Continued monitoring of pilot structures, existing structures and ice damming efforts will provide key information.	FPTI CTTE		Not Due Yet	2023
Goal: Identify and assess the risk of alternative management options to provide recommendations toward achieving desired flows and water levels				
EFH63: Using or adapting models built and knowledge obtained from environmental flows assessments and early actions, assess the predicted impacts of potential management options, singly or in combination.	FPTI CTTE		Underway	2021

ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	PROGRESS @ December 1, 2024	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE, AS PER ACTION PLAN
EFH64: Select a set of priority scenarios to undertake more detailed evaluation including assessing what impact each has on the achievement of key selected ecological and traditional use objectives/outcomes (using indicators as identified above, such as muskrat).	FPTI CTTE		Underway	2023
EFH65: Assess the impact of priority scenarios on interests upstream and downstream of the PAD.	FPTI CTTE		Underway	2023
EFH66: Impact assessment and detailed analyses of desired management options.	Jurisdictional authority		Underway	2024
EFH67: Recommend the preferred management approach(es) to the relevant jurisdictional authorities that could support achieving the ecological and traditional use EFH objectives.	FPTI CTTE		Underway	2024
EFH68: Continue to monitor and adapt toward achieving the desired outcomes.	FPTI CTTE		Not Due Yet	2024, and ongoing
Goal: To establish a Knowledge Hub to make PAD information and data from science-based and Indigenous Knowledge sources more easily accessible.				
EFH69: Complete a user-needs survey to assess what type of information and presentation the various users require or want.	ECCC		Completed	2019
EFH70: Establish an appropriate knowledge hub platform, informed by similar existing resources (e.g., Mackenzie Data Stream) that targets needs without creating redundancies.	ECCC		Completed	2020
EFH71: Establish data sharing protocols.	FPTI CTTE		Completed	2023
EFH72: Develop a basic ethics and data sharing agreement that can be adapted as needed.	FPTI CTTE		Completed	2019
EFH73: Update knowledge hub routinely with monitoring and study data from within Wood Buffalo National Park.	FPTI CTTE		Underway	2023
EFH74: Establish communication mechanisms and frequency to exchange information with (a) communities, (b) jurisdictions and governments, and (c) stakeholders and the general public.	FPTI CTTE		Completed	2019
EFH75: Regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of the Knowledge Hub and ensure links are up to date.	FPTI CTTE		Not Due Yet	2023
THEME: Monitoring and Science (MS)				
OUTCOME: An Integrated PAD Research and Monitoring program (using both WS and IK), supported by a community-based research and monitoring hub, is implemented to detect cumulative effects on the PAD and to generate information that informs land-use management and regulatory decision making.				
MS1: Coordinate PAD Research and Monitoring Workshops; develop and implement integrated PAD Research and Monitoring Program.	PCA	ECCC	Completed (on-going)	2023

ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	PROGRESS @ December 1, 2024	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE, AS PER ACTION PLAN
MS2: Initiate annual PAD Symposium to share findings of PAD-related science and monitoring work underway by various organizations.	PCA	ECCC	Completed (on-going)	2020
MS3: Develop targets, indicators and specific objectives (using science-based and Indigenous Knowledge) required to evaluate the status and trend of the elements of OUV of Wood Buffalo National Park.	PCA	ECCC	Completed (on-going)	2020
MS4: Undertake Wetland Classification of the PAD and of Wood Buffalo National Park to support ecological assessments of the PAD and other wetlands within Wood Buffalo National Park.	PCA		Completed	2019
MS5: Obtain high-resolution digital terrain imagery of the PAD.	PCA, ECCC	OSM	Completed	2020
MS6: Advance the concept of a PAD monitoring hub to support better integration of science-based and Indigenous Knowledge of the PAD.	Indigenous Partners, PCA, ECCC		Underway	2020
MS7: Develop periodic State of the PAD reports.	PCA	ECCC	Not Due Yet	TBD
MS8: Expand invasive species monitoring and management to the Salt Plains as part of ongoing vegetation monitoring in Wood Buffalo National Park.	PCA	ECCC	Completed (on-going)	2019
MS9: Continue to monitor environmental indicators in the PAD through the Oil Sands Monitoring Program under the programs' scope, mandate and governance structure. Ensure this monitoring and reporting is coordinated with and leveraged as needed with the actions throughout this plan.	AB and, ECCC	OSM	Completed (on-going)	2023
THEME: Wildlife and Habitat Conservation (WH)				
OUTCOME: Support the recovery of wood bison and whooping crane within and beyond Wood Buffalo NP through the implementation of recovery actions and species management in collaboration with Indigenous groups and using Indigenous Knowledge.				
WH1: Complete the Recovery Strategy for Wood Bison.	ECCC	PCA	Completed	2019
WH2: Undertake an Imminent Threat Assessment for Ronald Lake and Wabasca wood bison herds.	ECCC		Completed	2019
WH3: Launch a collaborative multi-stakeholder bison disease management planning group to examine options and coordinate activities aimed at eliminating the risk of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis transmission.	PCA		Underway	TBD
WH4: Develop one or more Action Plans for wood bison.	ECCC		Not Due Yet	2022
WH5: Begin work to identify critical habitat for wood bison.	ECCC		Completed (on-going)	2021

ACTION	LEAD ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	PROGRESS @ December 1, 2024	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE, AS PER ACTION PLAN
WH6: Develop a cooperative management arrangement with Indigenous communities, to help support traditional land use and cultural values, including the exercise of rights recognized under section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982, on the management of the Ronald Lake Bison Herd in conjunction with the BSA and adjacent conservation areas.	AB		Completed	2023
WH7: Develop an Indigenous Knowledge Research Process to complement the Ronald Lake Bison Herd Technical Team.	AB		Completed	On-going
WH8: Continue to monitor the nesting area of the whooping crane within Wood Buffalo National Park and its wider ecosystem.	ECCC, PCA		Completed (on-going)	2023
WH9: Conduct high-resolution remote sensing to assess the extent and use of whooping crane breeding habitat.	ECCC, PCA		Completed (on-going)	2019
WH10: Update critical habitat identification for whooping crane.	ECCC	PCA	Not Due Yet	2022
WH11: Identify landing and stopover sites used by whooping cranes within the oil sands region during migration.	ECCC	PCA	Completed (on-going)	2019

Annex II: Feedback on Wood Buffalo National Park State of Conservation Report from Indigenous Partners

Feedback was received from Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (November 19, 2024) and Mikisew Cree First Nation (November 20, 2024)

Committee Recommendation	Report Feedback from Indigenous Partners	
	Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation	**Mikisew Cree First Nation**
Paragraph 6: Appreciates the ongoing work to develop a hydrologic model to understand the flows required to deliver environmental benefits to the PAD, but expresses concern that a functional modelling platform, which can inform decision-making, will not be available before 2024 and that, to date, no operational strategy or protocol for implementing potential water releases or control structures that might be proposed based on the outcomes of the hydrologic model has been agreed;	There is no mention of ECCC leveraging partnerships with indigenous governments or communities. There is no completed hydrologic model. No work to integrate WCS, flow releases and eflows has been done. Leadership by ECCC has withered, unclear if the EFH still exists. senior lead [redacted] now works for the Canada Water Agency, her replacement [redacted] does not respond to email requests to meet. To date no deliverables have been shared. The Bayesian Belief Network (BBN) process started in spring of 2023 and remains poorly advanced. Eflows publication not completed, BBN contract with Australian consultant no deliverables completed. Zero transparency from ECCC on funding, deliverables, or timelines. Flow records/datasets remain incomplete.	**<u>MCFN Comment:</u>** While the response is true, it doesn't claim much more than saying that the work has started and is continuing, making do with what PCA get get/find along the way. These components were moving along but have slowed considerably since funding stopped at the end of March 2024. <u>Additional comments:</u> *Functional modelling program*: Is this available yet? *Partnerships with existing federal, provincial and academic expertise and capacity:* How does IK inform this? *Work to advance protocol to enable strategic releases of water from upstream dams:* Where is the province in undertaking impact assessment upstream? No test releases have been conducted to date, likely none before end of funding in 2026 - how is / will this progress?
Paragraph 7: Reiterates its utmost concern about the lack of progress in addressing the cumulative impacts of industrial developments around the property, the continued expansion of existing oil sands projects without full consideration of the potential impacts on the OUV of the property, the continued absence of an adequate risk assessment for large tailings ponds upstream of the property despite evidence of major risks, including seepage as well as proposals under consideration to allow the release of treated oil sands processed water (OSPW) into the Athabasca River;	First, ACFN is not aware of an ongoing ecological monitoring and impact assessment around the property. Request: Parks Cananda share with ACFN any oil sands project that has undergone a federal impact assessment. ACFN understands that the way the IAA is tailored, oil sands projects which have major cumulative impacts on the PAD is under provincial regulations. Furthermore, the continued absence of an adequate risk assessment has not been resolved. In September 2024, the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) sent a letter to the Government of Alberta Minister	*NIL*

	of Environment (with a copy to the Federal Minister of ECCC) requesting the development of a Tailings Risk Assessment as part of the Wood Buffalo National Park Action Plan. ACFN's letter expressed serious concerns to Minister [redacted] about the ongoing and significant risks posed by tailings ponds in the oil sands region, which continue to endanger the lands, waters, and communities of ACFN. Chief Adam's letter called for immediate action to fulfill the commitment outlined in the Wood Buffalo National Park Action Plan, specifically regarding the urgent need for a comprehensive Tailings Risk Assessment. This assessment is critical to understanding and mitigating the environmental hazards associated with tailings ponds, which have been a longstanding source of pollution and a threat to biodiversity, the health of Indigenous communities, and the OUVs. Unfortunately, the response ACFN received from Minister [redacted] failed to adequately address these concerns or outline clear steps to ensure that the necessary assessment is conducted. The reply lacked the urgency and concrete measures needed to protect the environment and uphold the commitments made in the Action Plan. In addition, ACFN does not support any form of OSPW treatment and release into the environment. This is because of the environmental risks associated with OSPW treatment. The rationale for this is that, no matter the type of technology(ies) used for OSPW treatment, there will still be residual harmful substances (such as hydrocarbons, naphthenic acids etc.) that can bioaccumulate in aquatic resources, plants, wildlife, and can end up in humans as well as in downstream ecosystems and communities such as ACFN.	
Paragraph 8.1: Strengthen efforts to transition to a genuine partnership with Indigenous rightsholders in the governance and management of the property,	There are some things that need to be done on Canada's side for the contemplated shared governance and some are highlighted as follows: - Governance working group: awaiting funding through PCA for 2.5 years process by which the IGs governments could prepare a vision for co-governance of WBNP. - The CMC formed a governance working group with the idea of revisiting the CMC TOR and looking at a co-governance model rather than a co-operative management structure. The CMC Indigenous Caucus is awaiting WBNP PCA to come back and say yes, we can begin negotiations toward co-governance based on this framework.	In particular by: a. supporting the Indigenous Caucus in developing an indigenous led vision for a shared governance model for WBNP, based on the values of respect and equity, which focuses on commonalities and respects differences by including both parkwide and locally tailored components; b. operationalizing the Cooperative Management Committee by jointly developing the Terms of Reference agreed by all indigenous rightsholders and PCA and ensure that effective decision-making mechanisms are in place;

	- The next step identified is for CMC to develop a work plan for negotiations which include some funding attached to it as well for the IGs to participate in that process. There are concerns on the tendency for PCA to go off and make unilateral decisions without involving the CMC. - Shared Governance Framework: ○ The original proposal was to do the work required to get consensus on a framework and bring that framework to WBNP to begin work collectively toward negotiations for a new model more robust than the current CMC. More work was done by delivering a summary of the principles, goals, and objectives sent to PC, minister, etc. And the framework from a vision, principles, goals, and objectives perspective for IGs to get together with PC to discuss how to move forward on the negotiations of the new agreement. But we have been waiting for a response for that for a while – 3-4 month. **To reiterate, we are looking for core governance rather than a cooperative management process and moving forward on this will need new funding for this process. Therefore, efforts to transition to a genuine partnership with Indigenous rightsholders in the governance and management of the property is weak.**	c. supporting indigenous communities' initiatives of interpreting and valorising the values of WBNP reflecting holistic indigenous worldviews and cultural elements of indigenous ways of life. <u>Additional comments:</u> Can you respond to how the workplan in 2019 has been moved forward? Please add section about Indigenous Nation requests for bilateral relationships for informed decision making re: community specific issues or initiatives, such as federally recognized reserve lands, group trapping areas, harvesting rights, etc How has the Shared Governance process informed the Indigenous Stewardship Policy? *Report summarizing the results of the work to date:* Report has been shared, please report on Canada's process to respond and enter to the process
Paragraph 8.2: Complete hydrodynamic modelling and environmental flows assessment,	ECCC requested pressure funding from their DM to continue working on the Action Plan for the current fiscal year, and were refused. ECCC has significantly (almost completely) withdrawn staff support on the Action Plan. ZERO updates given on Eflows progress. ECCC AP participant list requests go unanswered. Engagement staff left for other work. Researchers at ECCC working on the PAD using OSM funding no AP monies. WCS work continues to be an example of excellent work and remains confusing as to why the rest of the EFH was not undertaken in the same way. Nonetheless no mechanism exists to pay for the WCS.	MCFN Comment: While these comments are accurate, they do not indicate percent accomplished toward the objective. The concern is that this work is underway but the finish line isn't in sight and this is partly because the endpoint and a pathway to it have not been established. <u>Additional comments:</u> *Environmental flows framework:* Still a top down process, require a strategic FPTI rethink with some clarity and commitment to scop. Need commitments on all OUVs. *Bayesian Belief Network:* Update on funding and process? Is this going ahead?

	In addition, the Bayesian Belief Network[1] (BBN) is a small aspect of the eflows work but it has not advanced beyond a basic concept in 20 months. The 2-D hydraulic model was not done to support eflows rather, it was specific to the design and IA for the WCS. The MOST significant conflict in the WCS process was BECAUSE no Eflows work had been advanced sufficiently to compare Hydro flows to impacts on the Slave.	*Tools to support the evaluation of the effectiveness of various proposed water management actions:* Right now there is no clear connection between tools; what is the strategy and vision for this and a proper FPTI Framework to work within and commitment from FPTI to support tools *This work, in addition to the development of the Bayesian Belief Network, contributes to the suite of tools which support the environmental flows framework:* How?
Paragraph 8.3: Ensure that no further dam projects on the Peace River are approved, including the proposed Amisk Project, until sufficient evaluation tools are in place to evaluate impacts on the hydrology of the PAD,	*NIL*	It is important to note that the new amendments to the federal Impact Assessment Act will enable the indigenous communities that intend to participate to have an enhanced role in that assessment with the federal government
Paragraph 8.4: Urgently establish a sound decision-making mechanism for ecological flow releases.	Agreement on ecological releases – in fulfilling its mandate to work collaboratively with indigenous partners in the management of WBNP, how does PCA intend to seek consensus with partners? Will this be through the CMC? It would be helpful for PCA to be clear and put it in writing the basis that this consensus with partners would be sought. Also, ACFN would like to know the status on the agreement reached that PCA, Alberta and BC Hydro should develop an inter-jurisdictional agreement to define D-M roles and other responsibilities*?* In addition, the interjurisdictional work by PCA lacks integration with the monitoring work being undertaken by the IRMP and also is unsupported by an overarching Eflows process to link potential flows to other PAD processes. We also acknowledge plans by ECCC and PCA to continue work with all partners to advance implementation of water management options in the PAD including advancing a draft MOU between PCA, GoA and BC Hydro.	MCFN Comment: A workshop happened in Edmonton March 2 & 3, 2023 which marked the end of progress on this EFH objective. No other work seems to be accomplished and Compass has complicated its Structured Decision Making (SDM) deliverables from that workshop and the process leading up to it. It appears to have taken Alberta over a year to initiate a flood risk study for Garden River. The timeline for that work is unclear/unknown yet that stands in the way of Alberta being willing to consider a trial release. Overall, PCA and its provincial and federal partners have not shown any urgency to get these releases in place. Instead, they continue to talk and assess, postponing the first release into the future indefinitely (it seems). Sadly, there is just no evidence that a release is anywhere near to happening. Further, when and if it does happen, Alberta appears to be so risk averse that the effectiveness of the release for meaningfully enhancing PAD flooding appears remote. <u>Additional comments:</u>

[1] Bayesian Belief Network is a probabilistic graphical model that represents a set of variables and their conditional dependencies.

		Existing authorities at the federal and provincial levels are in place and can support decision-making: Include Indigenous communities *Whether ecological flow releases would benefit the PAD and whether risks can be mitigated:* Is there actual discussion of ecological flow release (ie: to improve ecological integrity of all OUVs) as the conversation seems to be limited to releases to enhance natural ice jams only *Memorandum of Understanding between Parks Canada, The Government of Alberta, and BC Hydro:* Is BC Hydro willing to sign onto a letter of agreement to support this work?
Paragraph 8.5: Decide, before 2026, on a set of concrete mitigation measures to correct the impacts of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and other alterations to the hydrology of the PAD and agree on operational strategies and interjurisdictional protocols for the implementation of the adopted mitigation measures, together with a sufficient budget for their implementation.	Distinction should be made to differentiate use of words like stakeholders, rightsholders and partners for clarity. WCS face a significant challenge in that no financial support has been provided or committed by PCA yet. Also, some IGs have concerns with WCS and offered conditions that it would be accepted. There has to be reasonable mitigation measures such as coinciding the WCS use with a BC Hydro flow release, but PCA has stated that this condition is outside the scope of WCS project and in the purview of eflows process. The lack of EFH/eflows is a significant barrier is stalling the advancement of these critical infrastructure/corrective action project.	MCFN Comment: Indigenous representatives have stated the need to develop longer-term governance models that can ensure that trans-boundary water management is guided by OUV health and better facilitate/ensure that necessary actions are taken by interjurisdictional partners to implement corrective actions required to achieve desired outcomes for the PAD. Canada acknowledges these requests and recognizes that, at present, there are no strategic flow release agreements or other transboundary agreements that are directly responsive to the requests of indigenous communities. Canada is committed to continued explorations of options based on a path that partners support. No timetable or process is currently developed for these explorations. MCFN Comment: The downsides of this project are concerning. PCA does not seem to have a backup plan should this project not be funded or not accepted by communities because of the significant trade-offs and incomplete Indigenous support. It is concerning that no additional water or resources from BC Hydro is up for consideration. Indigenous communities are being asked to suffer all the negative consequences associated with this proposal with no partnership/contribution from BC Hydro, who created the source of the problem . <u>Additional comments:</u>

		What conversations have been had with BC Hydro, what options have been evaluated, and budget has been contemplated and who is providing funding? *Strategic flow releases:* Focus should be on Ecological Flow Releases for the health of all OUVs, not limited to ice jam events *Dog Camp Water Control:* More consultation is required to understand full impacts and support? Why is BC Hydro (theoretically) willing to return water for the strategic flow release but is not putting any water (in terms of volume) and/or funding on the table for the Dog Camp water control structure?
Paragraph 8.6: Conduct an independent systematic risk assessment of the tailings ponds of the Alberta Oil Sands region, with a focus on risks to the PAD, before the end of 2024	This is related to the earlier comments on the continued lack of a tailings risk assessment, the poor leadership by the Government of Alberta, and Canada's inability to undertake this important work, despite ACFN consistently raising concerns on this issue.	Additional comment: *Since the last State of Conservation report in 2022, funding was provided in 2022-23 and 2023-24 by the Government of Canada*: Is this funding still available?
Paragraph 8.7: Re-evaluate and adapt collaborative, systematic, science-based monitoring of oil sands impacts on the Athabasca River and PAD to ensure sufficient parameters, sampling design, and protocols are employed to detect impacts	ACFN begs to differ on the perception that work is advancing with the concerned Indigenous communities. ACFN's representation on the Oil Sands Monitoring program is limited to the Indigenous Community Based Monitoring Advisory Committee (ICBMAC). There is no representation in the Technical Advisory Committee (TACs) and the Science and Indigenous Knowledge Integration Committee (SIKIC). The development of the IRMP is well advanced, however long-term funding to undertake the full breadth of the effort is poorly established. The funding mechanism to do the monitoring and research is not established. Coordination between ECCC PAD researchers with PAC is actually quite poor. There is lack of ECCC leadership to direct ECCC PAD research to achieve AP goals. Poor integration between IRMP and Oil Sands Monitoring work. Also, it must be clearly stated that IRMP will be led or at a minimum co-led by Nipiy Tu Research and Knowledge Centre. Additionally, although the field station has advanced significantly in its construction, discussions are ongoing about the eventual Indigenous ownership, control, and management of the station.	MCFN Response: The Action Plan refers to work done under the Oil Sands Monitoring Program for several of its actions, particularly TP9. The Oil Sands Monitoring Program has its own scope and priorities, and in fact, has not approved several Action Plan-related workplans. The Program may monitor ambient environmental conditions, but it does not monitor into the WBNP, nor has a risk assessment on changes to environmental condition been done. Other challenges include lack of staffing, slow timelines for approving workplans and providing funding to monitoring agencies once they are approved. The greatest challenge is that the program has failed to institute a timely mechanism for reporting on data. Indigenous communities have identified that the current OSM Core Program is not providing responses to questions regarding source-pathway-receptor relationship and cannot adequately track trends or get a holistic view on cumulative effects and/or impacts upon their Rights. Communities feel that there has been little change with regards

		to accessing comprehensive, accurate and unbiased data which should be used to inform management or mitigation decisions. Communities face significant health, environmental, and cultural risks due to the tailings water seepage and spills from oil sands facilities such as the Kearl Oil Sands. Unfortunately, despite regulatory requirements, these communities have repeatedly received incomplete or unverifiable data from industry reports, casting doubt on the safety and transparency of existing monitoring efforts. <u>Additional comments:</u> *IRMP – comprehensive monitoring program based on science and Indigenous Knowledge (IK)*: IK will be handled by MCFN directly; data sharing agreements will be required to further develop how and if IK/Intellectual Property will be shared *IRMP – current efforts are focused on validation of the science and Indigenous knowledge indicators:* Is there a TOR for this group?
Paragraph 8.8: Develop, before 2026, a clear, consensus-based strategy consistent with precautionary principles for the reclamation of tailing ponds, including the treatment and disposal of OSPW, which guarantees protection of the water quality of the Athabasca River and the PAD and avoids any impact on the OUV of the property	ACFN is part of the CIWG that was established by ECCC to examine the possibility of developing effluents for OSPW treatment and release. However, ACFN maintains the position of not accepting any form of treatment and release given the environmental risks associated with any form of treatment of OSPW as there will always be residual harmful substances following any type of OSPW treatment. The CIWG work carried out research that involved the examination of the alternatives to treatment and release. For the provincial steering committee struck by GoA, ACFN remains critical about this committee given the way it was established without any consultation with rightsholders who are the most impacted by oil sands tailings activities. In addition, Indigenous representation on this committee is limited to one member that cannot adequately or appropriately capture the concerns of ACFN and other IGs. Although ACFN has provided a written submission to this committee outlining the various challenges with oil sands tailings including issues and	MCFN Response: Opposed to Treat and Release, priority should be on options/alternatives related to Tailings Management. The expansion and continued storage of tailings on the landscape needs to be addressed for culturally acceptable reclamation. <u>Additional comment:</u> *Oil Sands Mine Water Steering Committee:* How have communities been meaningfully engaged in this process and how is it protective of the OUVs in WBNP?

	concerns related to the Provincial Tailings Management Framework for Mineable Athabasca Oil Sands, ACFN remains highly skeptical with how far this committee will move forward with these tailings issues in a way that safeguards the environment, the OUVs, ACFN's inherent and Aboriginal Treaty rights, as well as the health of our people.	
Paragraph 8.9: Ensure that all major development projects in the PAD watershed, including all oil sands mining extension projects, are subject to federal impact assessments and specifically address potential impacts on the OUV of the property, in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impacts Assessments in a World Heritage context	At this point, Suncor's Base Mine Expansion Project (BMX) is the only oil sand project subject to the Federal Impact Assessment Process. However, other extensions such as CNRL's North Pit Extension Project (NPE) are being fought either by the company or both the company and Alberta government not to be included in the Federal Impact Assessment Process.	*NIL*
Paragraph 8.10: Ensure that all impact assessments of other projects in the larger landscape around the property that are not subject to federal impact assessment and that are under the responsibility of the Government of Alberta fully consider the OUV of the property and the concerns of indigenous rightsholders beyond the direct project footprint.	There is no response here from PC on which to comment.	Indigenous communities of the PAD note that actions in the environmental assessment theme of the Action Plan relating to provincial environmental management frameworks continue to have limited progress. Despite years of effort by indigenous communities, the Framework has not been amended to address issues relating to climate change, indigenous navigation or the health of the Peace Athabasca Delta. As such, Indigenous communities in the PAD remain concerned that a key performance indicator for addressing negative trends in one of the major tributaries of the PAD, the Athabasca River, has yet to see any measurable outcome with respect to the protection of the Park's OUV
Paragraph 8.11: Further strengthen the monitoring of flagship species, in particular the whooping crane and the wood bison	The use of innovative technological approaches like development of vaccines, diagnostics tests, etc. for the Wood Bison is under the Bison and Genomics Program. However, the funding for this program ends this year, 2024. No mention of this in the response and if there are plans to continue the program.	Tailings contained within ponds have the potential to impact migratory birds for whom the WBNP is a key breeding ground. The Peace Athabasca Delta (PAD) is one of North America's most important areas for waterbirds in North America (IEC, 2018). To reach the PAD, and other key breeding areas in the WBNP they fly over the oil sands mines and may rely on waterbodies for landing in poor weather. Some tailings ponds are as large as 10km2 and may be the largest waterbodies in the area (IEC, 2018). Therefore, bird landings in tailings ponds may be an ongoing and continued threat to the WBNP OUV.

		A summary of reported bird mortalities and contacts with tailings impoundments, oiled bird observations and mortalities indicates that tailings ponds are a consistent and ongoing threat to migratory and resident bird populations with over 280,000 contacts and 1,200 mortalities reported between 2017 and 2021 (Table 2; OSBCMP 2018; 2019; 2020; 2021; 2022)9. It is unknown how these contacts may impact bird migratory health and populations in the WBNP. (Excerpt from Current Risk from Oilsands – Technical Reports from the 2022 RMM) Additional comment on the above: How many are whooping cranes? Believe there are some. Additional comments: *In addition to regular surveillance flights, WBNP has created a "geo-fence":* Has this been created and why weren't we notified? Where is it located? What happens in the event that alert goes off? What actions will occur? Will there be any consultation on this? MCFN does not support the physical fence feasibility study.
Paragraph 8.12: Continue efforts to create a buffer zone under the World Heritage Convention around the property.	Has Parks Canada had conversations with indigenous communities and partners to determine if the formal designation of a buffered zone around the property is not necessary? This should be part of any management conversations. According to UNESCO, Buffer zones contribute to the protection, conservation, management, integrity, authenticity and sustainability of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. Therefore, giving consideration to establishing a formal buffer zone around WBNP should be explored. Furthermore, although the Kitaskino Nuwenene Wildland Park described above may contribute to a sort of 'buffer zone', there are gaps that exist along the southern border of the WBNP.	*NIL*
Paragraph 8.13: Revise the 10-year Management Plan based on an agreed Indigenous-led vision for a shared governance model for Wood Buffalo National Park and integrating strategies to address the key conservation concerns of the property.	See above section 8.1 for challenges and barriers around establishing an Indigenous-led governance model. Having established values is important, but any legitimacy is undermined when such shared values are disregarded, and unilateral decisions are made on the management of the Park by PC.	Additional comments: *Management plan for WBNP*: This work was requested to start by the CMC in 2019; Shared Governance has been submitted; when will this work commence?

		Shared governance model: Further consultation needs to take place on a governance model to address key conservation concerns of the property. *Collaboration with Indigenous partners to outline and identify the key strategies and priorities for managing and governing the site continue:* Bilateral relationships need to be established to set Nation-to-Nation priorities
Paragraph 8.14: Further streamline the implementation of the Action Plan, including by improving inter-agency coordination, defining clear impact indicators, ensuring long-term and multiannual support and funding for capacity-building for indigenous rightsholders to enable full and effective participation, and ensuring that appropriate budget allocations are made for its implementation	Exploring financial resourcing opportunities is not "ensuring long-term and multiannual support and funding for capacity-building for indigenous rightsholder". This is only a response to say, we'll do our best. It does not commit Canada to adequately resourcing the advancement of shared priorities. Canada/PC must commit to adequately fund this work, and not just to the exploration of finding funding.	Additional comment: *Financial resourcing opportunities:* Current funding ends in 2026, will there be a commitment to ongoing funding and work toward the action plan? The mission notes efforts to address the issues will need to be sustained beyond 2026 and that more substantial funding will be needed going beyond the current time horizon of the Plan to achieve its objectives. Need to assess how far the Action Plan will succeed in reversing the current negative trend of key attributes and achieve the desired outcomes in restoring the OUV of the property, including the ecological integrity of the PAD. Update/renew SEA with tracking impacts and trends. *Support and funding for capacity-building for Indigenous partners:* Can we see an audit of the approximately $77 million invested into WBNP
Paragraph 9: Also notes the recommendation of the mission not to inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger at this stage to allow more time to implement the Action Plan updated with the above recommendations and also notes that a new Reactive Monitoring mission in 2026 would allow to assess whether sufficient progress has been made to reverse the current downward trends and avert further degradation of the OUV of the property, and whether the property	The representation of 80% could be misunderstood as being further along than what is actually accomplished. There should be a clear distinction between completed actions as a % of the workplan, and an analysis of what actions are underway, and how far along they are to completion, as indicated in the Appendix (see comments in Appendix key table).	Additional comment: *Reactive Monitoring Mission 2026:* Now is time for a strategic rethink and commitment to action and funding in preparation. *80% of measures are either completed or underway*: How has success been measured and by who? No indication of shortcomings, failures, or successes of actions is available. We need to find a way to tie progress to the ultimate goals and objectives of enhancing ecological integrity of OUVs. Is there an ability to develop metrics or update SEA to track trends?

meets the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger;		
Paragraph 10: Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2024, an updated Action Plan taking into account the recommendations of the 2022 mission.	The request is to update the plan with the recommendations of the 2022 mission, not merely to consider the recommendations. ACFN notes that it has asked several times why the plan has not actually been updated to reflect the 2022 mission recommendations, and has received the response that PC does not feel there were enough differences to warrant an update; this is not for PC to decide. The recommendation is to update the plan, so let's update it.	*NIL*

Comments on Annex I: Update on Implementation of the Wood Buffalo Action Plan

ACTION	**ACFN** Comment/Information Request	**MCFN** Comment / Information Request
THEME: Strengthening Indigenous Partnerships with Wood Buffalo National Park (IP)		
OUTCOME: Improved relationships between Wood Buffalo NP and its Indigenous partners results in improved, cooperative management of the park that meets the interests of all parties.		
IP1: CMC will identify core areas of immediate interest regarding the management of the site, and adjust its process as required to effectively address these areas of interest.		Priorities (listed below) were set by CMC in 2019, please provide progress report on how these priorities have been adequately resourced and actioned: • Human Resources Policy • Procurement Policy • Park Management Plan • Fire Management • Tourism Development and Cultural Resources • Law Enforcement and Guardianship
IP2: CMC will develop and adopt policies to meet the interests of all parties, in particular related to the staffing of Indigenous persons and a contracting policy to ensure that opportunities for Indigenous persons are enhanced.	IP2 – ACFN considers this action as incomplete because the interests of all parties have not been met. CMC has not yet adopted shared governance. Also - regarding staffing, the Acting Field Unit Superintendent removed the Park Site Sup. from her post without consulting CMC - this staff is a local Indigenous woman selected by CMC. This decision does not serve the interests of indigenous communities if they were not carried along in this staffing decision.	Please provide us with an update of all positions that have been filled through the use of the Indigenous HR Policy, this includes Site Superintendent and WBNP Managers
IP3: Increase capacity for park management and staffing in Fort Chipewyan, to respond to the pressures facing the Peace–Athabasca Delta.	IP3 – increasing capacity for park management and staffing in Fort Chipewyan remains a challenge with the persistent lack of staff capacity plaguing Parks Canada. And it appears that consistency of staffing for field unit superintendent is a challenge with high staff	

ACTION	**ACFN** Comment/Information Request	**MCFN** Comment / Information Request
	turnover. This action can only be considered completed once these points are resolved satisfactorily.	
IP4: Develop and implement a training program for Wood Buffalo National Park staff designed to improve the evolving relationship with Indigenous communities.		Request the training program for WBNP Staff that is reflective of the Indigenous communities
IP5: Continue engagement through bilateral processes between First Nations and Métis groups where these have been established.		Provide update on how/when bilateral processes have been developed and implemented with MCFN
IP6: Co-develop (with Indigenous groups) options for enhancing the profile of Indigenous content in Wood Buffalo NP and for recognizing Indigenous contributions to Wood Buffalo NP.		How is success defined here?
THEME: Environmental Assessment (EA)		
OUTCOME: Ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value of the property is considered in environmental assessments where potential specific or cumulative impacts may occur on the OUV of Wood Buffalo NP, in particular in the Peace–Athabasca Delta.		
EA1: Refer the proposed Amisk Hydroelectric Project to an independent review panel.		
EA2: Amend Guidelines for the Preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Amisk Hydroelectric Project to direct consideration of potential effects of the project on the OUV of the park, including the PAD.		
EA3: Conduct an SEA on the potential of all developments to impact the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wood Buffalo NP World Heritage Site and submit to the World Heritage Centre.		
EA4: Submit the SEA to the Joint Review Panel for the Teck Frontier Oil Sands Mine Project for consideration.		
EA5: Amend the Joint Review Panel Agreement for Teck Frontier to mandate the Panel to consider and report on the potential environmental and cumulative effects of the project on the OUV of the World Heritage Site, including the PAD.		
EA6: Evaluate the potential effects of the Frontier Project on the OUV of the park and provide assessment to the Teck Frontier Joint Review Panel for its consideration in the environmental assessment.		
EA7: Ensure that all current and future environmental assessment reviews conducted pursuant to federal legislation consider the specific and cumulative impacts on the OUV of Wood Buffalo NP and are aligned with the IUCN World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment and World Heritage, to the extent possible.		

ACTION	**ACFN** Comment/Information Request	**MCFN** Comment / Information Request
Goal: Continue to work with Indigenous communities and stakeholders on Lower Athabasca Region environmental management frameworks.		
EA8: Continue to work with Indigenous communities and stakeholders on the Aboriginal navigation component of the Alberta's Lower Athabasca Region Surface Water Quantity Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River. This will include further development of the Aboriginal Navigation Index.	EA8: the assertion that Aboriginal Navigation Index is underway is novel to ACFN. We are not part of this work if it is underway and at what point are going to be notified for participation?	Stalled
EA9: Develop a work plan to address ecological knowledge gaps as identified in the Lower Athabasca Region Surface Water Quantity Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River.	EA9: ACFN does not a copy of the workplan and the deliverables. Parks Canada will have to provide ACFN access to the deliverables. It must be clearly stated that ACFN has requested on several occasions to see what these tables represent. Therefore, ACFN cannot consider this action as completed.	Was the work plan developed, by who, can we review the completed work?
EA10: Conduct an analysis of Oil Sands Monitoring Program water quality stations and parameters in the oil sands region and including, where applicable, the Peace–Athabasca Delta to assess changes in water quality relative to limits of change and considering Indigenous community-based monitoring. This would be conducted for those elements that fall within the programs' scope and mandate and respecting the program's governance structure.		Provide approved proposal that is underway
EA11: Integrate the findings of Oil Sands Water Quality analysis to inform updates to the Surface Water Quality Management Framework.	EA11: ACFN will like details on the findings of Oil sands Water Quality analysis and how it will be used to inform the Surface Water Quality Management Framework.	Provide approved proposal that is underway
EA12: Complete development of a cumulative effects environmental monitoring framework for the Oil Sands Monitoring Program under the programs' scope, mandate and governance structure		
THEME: Conservation Area Connectivity (CC)		
OUTCOMES: Improved connectivity for wildlife and supporting processes; Increased ecological integrity and resiliency of the Outstanding Universal Value of Wood Buffalo National Park World Heritage Site; Improved connectivity for the protection and exercise of Aboriginal and treaty rights; Strengthened relationships with Indigenous partners through respectful application of science-based and Indigenous Knowledge to conservation planning and management.		
Goal: Within individual jurisdictions, establish buffer zones around Wood Buffalo NP through the establishment of adjacent protected and conserved areas.		

ACTION	**ACFN** Comment/Information Request	**MCFN** Comment / Information Request
CC1: Establish five new and expanded conservation areas under the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan, adjacent to Wood Buffalo NP, to increase functional connectivity for OUV within Wood Buffalo NP.		
CC2: Develop cooperative management arrangements with Indigenous communities and organizations to help support traditional land use and cultural values, including the exercise of rights recognized under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, for the five new and expanded wildland provincial parks under the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan.		Still outstanding; will AB provide a commitment
CC3: Advance (through discussions with Indigenous communities and stakeholders) the proposal for an additional conservation area on the land base known as the Biodiversity Stewardship Area immediately south of Wood Buffalo NP.		Significant progress achieved. But important areas remain unprotected
CC4: Following months of collaborative discussions with Indigenous groups, industry and other stakeholders, the Government of Alberta to consult on the creation of the Biodiversity Stewardship Area, which will designate the area as a wildland provincial park (protected area) from a multiple use land base with industrial tenure. The proposed protected area is about 166,110 hectares located directly south of Wood Buffalo NP.		Significant progress achieved. But important areas remain unprotected
CC5: Develop cooperative management arrangements with Indigenous communities for management of the BSA that supports Wood Buffalo NP OUV (e.g., bison and watershed protection), as well as Indigenous cultural and traditional values, including the exercise of rights recognized under section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982.		Still outstanding
CC6: Integrate an Indigenous Guardian Program to support Indigenous Stewardship of the five new and expanded conservation areas under the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan, as well as the Biodiversity Stewardship Area.	CC6: ACFN will like more information on the integration of indigenous guardian program to support indigenous stewardship as this is unknown.	Not initiated
CC7: Advance conservation priorities under "Healthy Lands, Healthy People: Government of Northwest Territories: Priorities for Advancement of Conservation Network Planning – 2016 – 2021".		
CC8: Advance regional land use planning processes in areas surrounding Wood Buffalo NP.		Not initiated; no funded 10 year review of LARP, no Peace Regional Planning has started; GNWT South Slave Regional Planning stalled
CC9: Enhance communication and explore opportunities for closer collaboration particularly under the Pathway to Canada Target 1 initiative.		Unclear when this was completed?
CC10: In association with the Pathway to Canada Target 1 support efforts to establish new tools for conservation that contribute to conservation area connectivity in the Wood Buffalo NP region.		Unclear when this was completed and with who?
CC11: Consolidate Indigenous and scientific information on the habitat and dispersal requirements for key species through extensive literature review and community led workshops.		

ACTION	**ACFN** Comment/Information Request	**MCFN** Comment / Information Request
Goal: Determine the ecological functional needs of the elements of OUV of Wood Buffalo NP as they relate to conservation area connectivity.		
CC12: Acquire existing data related to species occurrence and remote sensing for spatial analysis and mapping.		
CC13: Identify and confirm information gaps and identify plans to fill these gaps.		
CC14: Conduct analysis of assembled data and apply habitat and movement information acquired during workshops to develop a series of species-specific, landscape-scale, habitat suitability and connectivity maps.		
CC15: Peer review and gather feedback on spatial models. Peer review will include follow-up workshops to identify accuracy, strengths and weaknesses of resulting maps.		
CC16: Generate a series of map packages for subsequent communications and planning purposes that describe the results of the modelling process and highlight habitat and movement needs for key species throughout the Wood Buffalo NP region.		
Goal: Identify potential gaps necessary for the maintenance of OUV that can guide future conservation planning and/or management.		
CC17: Conduct workshop on spatial priorities for conservation including objectives for a gap analysis on areas in and adjacent to Wood Buffalo NP.		
CC18: Undertake landscape gap analysis and spatial conservation prioritization exercise using current methods and tools (i.e., Marxan).		
CC19: Produce maps and communication products that provide results of gap analysis and present design options for contributing to a regional network of protected and conserved areas, including a buffer zone adjacent to Wood Buffalo NP.		
THEME: Tailings Pond Risk Assessment (TP)		
OUTCOME: Tailings ponds are constructed, managed and maintained to limit impacts to the Athabasca River, and new and legacy tailings volumes are reclaimed in a timely manner, so that the risk of tailings ponds to the PAD is minimized.		
TP1: Ongoing implementation of the Tailings Management Framework to promote progressive reclamation, accelerate tailings treatment and improve the water management system. Continue to support existing forums for including indigenous perspectives on advancement of this work. Consider results of the tailings risk assessment study (TP2) in future review and amendment of the Tailings Management Framework and Directive 085.		Stalled: The Tailings Management Framework provided broad direction to “minimize fluid tailings accumulation,” reduce legacy tailings volumes, and set regional triggers and limits for tailings accumulation. The Tailings Management Framework was intended to guide not just tailings inventories, but also water and effluent

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		management, reclamation, and liability management – in essence to manage the factors leading to tailings accumulation. However, after less than a year, committees involved in implementation were abolished. Instead, under pressure from industry, Alberta has focused on developing effluent release regulations. This is a band aid solution that would help operators reduce liquid waste volumes on site, without addressing the full suite of reclamation issues or addressing how such volumes of water were allowed to accumulate in the first place.
TP2: Pursue a systematic tailings risk assessment by collaborating with Indigenous peoples, national/international experts, and industry to develop a landscape model considering tailings reclamation, hydrology, withdrawals, climate change, seepage, and cumulative effects. This is within the scope of the Oil Sands Monitoring Program and would be conducted through existing work planning and governance processes.	TP2: It is concerning that the one of the most important actions stressed as urgent by the IUCN, the systematic tailing risk assessment has not commenced.	Not supported
TP3: Amend the Water Ministerial Regulation, ensuring major water management infrastructure and tailings dams are safe.		Alberta updated its Water Ministerial Regulation in 2020. This did improve regulations surrounding the safety of tailings dams. However, the Athabasca Oil Sands Region remains the area with the highest concentration of dams with a high consequence of failure safety rating in the Province of Alberta.
TP4: Provide regulatory oversight to ensure tailings dams are safe and managed appropriately by operators.		Will AB and or PCA be referencing the recent Imperial, Suncor, or Syncrude incidents?
TP5: Minimize fluid tailings accumulation by ensuring that fluid tailings are treated and reclaimed progressively during the life of a project and all fluid tailings associated with a project are ready to reclaim within 10 years of end of the mine life of that project. Supported through ongoing work undertaken as part of tailings management implementation.		Not Implemented
TP6: Establish project-specific target, triggers and limit for new fluid tailings. Supported through ongoing work undertaken as part of tailings management implementation.		Industry establishes their own triggers and limits for new fluid tailings. This is not protective of WBNP's OUV.
TP7: Develop plans to reduce legacy tailing volumes to a ready-to-reclaim state by end of mine life.		Not Implemented
TP8: Tailings ponds are designed, constructed, operated, maintained, and decommissioned safely. Supported through ongoing work undertaken as part of tailings management implementation.		Tailings management framework not fully implemented

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TP9: Conduct ambient environmental monitoring to inform a risk assessment on changes to environmental condition.		The Oil Sands Monitoring Program has its own scope and priorities, and in fact, has not approved several Action Plan-related workplans. The Program may monitor ambient environmental conditions, but it does not monitor into the WBNP, nor has a risk assessment on changes to environmental condition been done. Other challenges include lack of staffing, slow timelines for approving workplans and providing funding to monitoring agencies once they are approved. The greatest challenge is that the program has failed to institute a timely mechanism for reporting on data.
TP10: Establish Oil Sands Process Affected Water Science Team to provide credible scientific information to inform government and regulatory bodies on potential process water treatment and release. Create additional Science Teams as needed to support implementation of the Tailings Management Framework.		Alberta established the Oil Sands Process Water Science Team in 2018 to address six technical information gaps identified by Alberta related to the development of regulations for proposed oil sands mine water releases from Syncrude Canada Limited's pilot effluent treatment system. Initially this was a largely collaborative multi-stakeholder process. In 2019, the Team was disbanded and replaced with the Oil Sands Mine Water Science Team, whose mandate was to focus on effluent release issues for the whole industry. This process has been coercive, with Alberta unilaterally imposing a Terms of Reference that severely limited input from team members and informed Indigenous communities that lack of acceptance of this approach would result in their exclusion. The work of the OSMW-ST wrapped up in 2023, with Indigenous groups stating that the work was advanced and completed on flawed science and without proper consideration of their comments/feedback. The science from this team now informs the Oilsands Mine Water Steering Committee

ACTION	**ACFN** Comment/Information Request	**MCFN** Comment / Information Request
THEME: Environmental Flows and Hydrology (EFH)		
OUTCOMES: **Ecological and Hydrological Integrity** – Water quantity improvements, including variability, sustain ecological functioning and integrity of the PAD to support the OUV. **Exercise of Aboriginal and treaty rights** – Water quantity improvements sustain healthy and abundant traditional resources and Indigenous ways of life in the PAD. **Informed Decision-Making** – Improved baseline data/knowledge and comprehensive environmental flows assessments inform decision-making related to the ecological and hydrological integrity of the PAD.		
Goal: To establish renewed and effective partnerships through a cross-jurisdictional and Indigenous governance team to guide and inform management actions toward achieving the desired hydrology outcomes of the PAD and Wood Buffalo NP.		
EFH1: Convene and resource an FPTI Committee and Secretariat to oversee implementation of the EFH portion of the Wood Buffalo NP Action Plan.	EFH1 - FPTI TOR was never completed, ECCC abandoned the process.	
EFH2: Develop FPTI Committee Terms of Reference		Concern that this was discontinued because ECCC-PCA was unable to provide meaningful terms of reference to our communities.
EFH3: Establish and task project teams to implement key actions (e.g., structural alternatives project team; target/objective-setting) outlined for the EFH theme. Note that timelines will be variable as the needs for various project teams change.		
EFH4: Establish clear lines of communication and linkages to existing processes such as the Mackenzie River Basin Board, Wood Buffalo NP Cooperative Management Committee, Alberta–NWT Bilateral Management Committee, Alberta Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, etc.		
EFH5: Implement a progress reporting mechanism to Federal, Provincial, Territorial, and Indigenous governments.	EFH5 – if there is a reporting 'mechanism' established, ACFN has seen no progress reports are given so far.	
EFH6: Communicate the findings of assessments, research, and modelling with stakeholders and Indigenous communities.	EFH6 – this work has not been completed	
Goal: Identify and describe the areas and conditions where changes to water quantity would support the achievement of the Outcomes for ecological and hydrological integrity & exercise of Aboriginal and treaty rights.		

ACTION	**ACFN** Comment/Information Request	**MCFN** Comment / Information Request
EFH7: Document priority locations in the PAD (Figure 6) where ecological integrity is impacted and intervention is required, as well as areas from currently documented sites of navigational and/or cultural importance in the PAD and identify which of these is appropriate for early action and monitoring for trends.		
EFH8: Identify the key objectives for the selected early action locations.		
EFH9: Initiate feasibility studies to assess what actions could be implemented to make progress toward these objectives, as described in actions EFH 32-33 (artificial ice dam) and EFH 56-57 (control structures).		
EFH10: Undertake Indigenous use interviews to identify priority navigation routes and pinch points for all communities that travel within Wood Buffalo NP for the exercise of Aboriginal and treaty rights, where not currently documented.	EFH10 – ACFN will like details on who and when this work was done. The last recollection on our side is [redacted] was to work on this, and this work was never started, let alone finished.	
EFH11: Undertake Indigenous use interviews to identify areas and timing of key contemporary and historic cultural importance including, but not limited to, medicine, hunting, fishing, gathering, spiritual and cultural practice.		
EFH12: Identify key areas of Wood Buffalo NP where water quantity changes are required to restore ecological integrity.		Please provide the written document that supports this outcome.
EFH13: Document the information from all above activities and summarize the specific objectives in a final report(s).		Do we have this document? Can we get this document?
EFH14: Over time, using adaptive management (see section 7.1.2 in the SEA), learn through action, monitoring, and modelling what water quantity change supports achievement of these objectives.		What has been tested through adaptive management. Please provide the report that describes and evaluated what was done.
Goal: Set SMART water quantity targets and indicators toward achieving the objectives identified above.		
EFH15: Assess use of existing indicators developed with Indigenous expertise, such as by the Mackenzie River Basin Board, the NREI and NRBS, those in place in Wood Buffalo NP through Parks Canada and Community-Based Monitoring programs.		
EFH16: Identify gaps in knowledge for indicators and targets and develop a plan to address these gaps.		
EFH17: In conjunction with 'objectives' interviews, conduct interviews of elders and land users to inform development of Indigenous SMART targets and rights-based indicators for Indigenous use objectives identified above (e.g., abundance of harvested species and/or traditional use plants; navigability of priority routes).		

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EFH18: Informed by the objectives and baseline hydrological conditions identified below, develop SMART targets (or target ranges or thresholds) and indicators to assess: · progress toward intermittent high elevation recharge of the PAD's perched basins (including key sites of Indigenous cultural importance within these perched basins, if applicable) · progress toward low elevation recharge and connectivity (including key sites of Indigenous cultural importance) · navigability of seasonal priority routes.		
EFH19: Make the targets and indicators available via the Knowledge Hub (see EFH 69-75), with regular reporting.		
Goal: Establish a monitoring regime that tracks the trend of indicators identified above across the extent of Wood Buffalo NP and the PAD and over time that evaluates the effectiveness of management actions, building on existing monitoring programs where possible.		
EFH20: Assess and inventory the historic and ongoing monitoring within Wood Buffalo NP.		
EFH21: In coordination with actions taken pursuant to Monitoring and Science theme, identify gaps in the types and location of monitoring within Wood Buffalo NP required to support monitoring of: a. indicators, including navigability, b. baseline / reference parameters, c. parameters required for model operation and validation, and d. water management actions.		
EFH22: Make monitoring data available, to local communities and decision-makers in a timely and transparent manner.		What is holding this up from completion?
Goal: Establish protocols for, and identify circumstances under which, a strategic release of water from the Williston Reservoir behind the W.A.C. Bennett Dam could enhance an ice jam flood event within Wood Buffalo NP to encourage flooding of the PAD, including its perched basins, while minimizing unwanted upstream and downstream risks.		
EFH23: Create a protocol for a proposal from the Government of Alberta for a test flow (a release of water from the W.A.C. Bennett Dam) to influence an ice jam event in the PAD similar to the 1996 request.		Underway is true but there is no sense of when a release will ever happen.
EFH24: Assemble currently available data and information that could indicate if a test flow has a reasonable chance of being successful while minimizing the risk of unintended negative consequences.		
EFH25: Identify gaps in knowledge, review assembled information and confirm gaps using a workshop format, and develop plans to fill knowledge gaps		
EFH26: Communicate with all stakeholders about management actions within the Peace–Athabasca Delta System to ensure risks are understood and acceptable.		

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EFH27: Implement the protocol as opportunities arise, including water release, if supported.		2023 has passed and the inaction on this item is symptomatic of the overall lack of progress in **achieving outcomes.**
EFH28: For each particular test flow, establish assessment criteria and appropriate monitoring.		2023 has passed and the inaction on this item is symptomatic of the overall lack of progress in **achieving outcomes.**
EFH29: Conduct analysis, modelling, and monitoring related to addressing knowledge gaps with the purpose of identifying more specific parameters that could be used to inform Alberta's request for a test flow release.		Ongoing but no indication of when the assessments will be finished.
EFH30: Update the protocol for a request from Alberta for a test flow release to influence an ice jam event in the PAD with more specific parameters, or update based on lessons learned from any subsequent ice jams and/or test flows.		No experience is being gained which is unfortunate. Each year that passes without a release is a lost opportunity to LEARN through adaptive management. **This one is DUE.**
Goal: To enhance spring flooding using artificial ice damming within Wood Buffalo NP.		This appeared in the Action Plan but was abandoned very early on because, based on experience, the communities did not see that this approach would be worthwhile.
EFH31: Establish ice dam project team.		
EFH32: Review past attempt to create an ice dam and related recommendations, and confirm one or more locations where an ice dam(s) could support the desired outcomes		
EFH33: Establish goals and objectives and develop a plan (i.e., Terms of Reference) to install an ice dam(s) to meet goals and objectives.		
EFH34: Obtain required equipment (spray ice pump(s), monitoring equipment, etc.), establish field team to implement plan.		
EFH35: Implement plan (given necessary environmental pre-conditions are met).		
EFH36: Monitor / document implementation and results, assess results against objectives, refine plan for implementation in future years. Assess the potential for ice dams to support improved ecological and hydrological integrity in other parts of the PAD.		
Goal: To enhance monitoring and to improve the assessment of current and future water quantity conditions in the Peace and Athabasca River Basins.		
EFH37: Assess the current state of knowledge and monitoring within the PAD.		
EFH38: Assess the current state of knowledge and monitoring within the Peace and Athabasca River Basins.		

ACTION	**ACFN** Comment/Information Request	**MCFN** Comment / Information Request
EFH39: Develop a common understanding of the complex hydrological function of the Peace and Athabasca River Basins and the PAD.		
EFH40: Conduct a water balance assessment of the Athabasca and Peace River basins.		This was changed to be an inventory of the licensed water withdrawals within the Peace and Athabasca basins. Mikisew agreed to this change. Thus, the water balance has been enabled by this work but has not been done.
EFH41: Determine the appropriate reference time point and scale to define baseline(s) conditions, including: pre-development, present conditions, naturalized.		
EFH42: Determine if appropriate baseline indicators are being monitored and identify gaps.		
EFH43: Develop plan to gather information to fill gaps in western and Indigenous Knowledge.		
EFH44: Undertake elder interviews (in conjunction with other interviews) to inform the pre-regulation and pre-development state of hydrology within the Peace–Athabasca River Basins and Delta.		
EFH45: Ensure identified hydrological indicators are being monitored at appropriate spatial and temporal scale. Integrate with target and indicator monitoring toward objectives wherever possible.		
EFH46: Communicate findings from baseline assessment to modelling work and to decision-makers to inform decisions related to future development or management action.		
EFH47: Periodically review and update baseline(s) as information becomes available and share results.		
Goal: To identify, modify and, if necessary, produce environmental flows assessment models that incorporate state-of-the-art understanding of localized effects of the past, ongoing, and projected climate changes, to inform future and ongoing management actions that could impact Wood Buffalo NP.		The creation of an eflows model is in its infancy. At this stage, it continues to be little more than conceptual. While it is using the approach of Bayesian Belief Networks (which is good), there is little to no flesh on the bones and this is concerning.
EFH48: Hold a workshop to facilitate a common understanding of the influence of oil sands withdrawals on Indigenous navigability.	EFH48 – there is conflict on progress with this action and EFH8. Has this been started or it's underway? ACFN needs clarity in communicating this.	Why has this not been done? Is Alberta open to making any changes to the water withdrawals taken for oilsands?

ACTION	**ACFN** Comment/Information Request	**MCFN** Comment / Information Request
EFH49: Inventory and assemble relevant currently available hydrological and geomorphological data, existing models (e.g., Athabasca River Basin Initiative and ongoing work under LARP for the Athabasca River, AEP forecast model of the Peace River, Mackenzie River Basin Hydraulic Model, data from Community-Based Monitoring) and information for the Peace and Athabasca Rivers and tributaries and include this inventory (and data, as appropriate) in the knowledge hub.		
EFH50: Hold a workshop(s) with science-based and Indigenous Knowledge experts to scope the variables and data required to produce: (1) a simplified (or geographically restricted) model(s) with existing data to predict and understand the effects of small-scale management options being considered. (2) a holistic, basin-wide, multi-jurisdictional environmental flows model.		We have repeatedly advocated for #1 to be done but without success. #2 which is happening but is so slow with no promised finish date. ECCC is moving it along but the recent loss of funding for the Action Plan appears to mean that this work has slowed down as a result.
EFH51: Review existing models and modelling results to identify options to achieve the identified objectives for Indigenous navigability and ecological outcomes in Wood Buffalo NP.		This has been done we have been provided the final spreadsheet. ECCC did this work internally. Please provide the outcome.
EFH52: Identify gaps and undertake a plan to address these gaps, including potential field studies, and develop finer-scale climate change scenarios for the longer-term holistic model, as requested in Recommendation 3.		Why does this say it is due? 2023 has passed…
EFH53: Develop a holistic, basin-wide, multi-jurisdictional model to the highest international standards to understand hydrological, ecological, and Indigenous use relationships in light of current and future climate change and cumulative effects of withdrawals and regulation.		Yes, but what is the status of this work. Can the model be applied incrementally as it is developed. It is concerning that nothing can be done until it is finished.
EFH54: Make the model(s) and requisite data available to inform future management actions or decisions in the Mackenzie basin that could impede or support the achievement of the PAD objectives and outcomes.		When this will be available?
EFH55: Update the model framework as data become available through study and management actions and share results.		
Goal: Strategically-placed short- and/or long-term water management control structure(s) within the PAD create a local hydrological regime that supports the ecological functioning and Indigenous use in identified target areas.		Two structures have been thoroughly examined for efficacy and environmental impact. The assessment of the Dog Camp structure is essentially complete and was supported by all participating Indigenous communities except SLFN. Importantly, there is NO funding in place for this proposed structure. No comment is provided here on the one planned for Big Egg Lake.
EFH56: Assemble and review overview of the existing data and information related to past, current, or potential control structures in the PAD.		

ACTION	**ACFN** Comment/Information Request	**MCFN** Comment / Information Request
EFH57: Obtain new information related to possible short-term or small-scale options to improve the hydrological regime in the PAD.		
EFH58: Pending feasibility assessment results and consultation with local communities, select the most appropriate action and complete the full design for one or more pilot control structures. · Determine appropriate Indigenous and hydro-ecological indicators and monitor for effects of the control structure(s) · Learning from monitoring and implementation results, adjust timing and length of installation and/or site of installation		
EFH59: Install one or more pilot control structures and/or repair existing weirs, as designed.		Why isn't it due yet?
EFH60: Monitor and adapt installation as required to progress toward objectives.		
EFH61: Identify remaining gaps in knowledge, including linkages between PAD with current or future structural scenarios, varying flow input, and impacts upstream and downstream.		
EFH62: Longer-term structural options will be assessed in the cumulative framework to test interactions with other management options. Continued monitoring of pilot structures, existing structures and ice damming efforts will provide key information.		
Goal: Identify and assess the risk of alternative management options to provide recommendations toward achieving desired flows and water levels		
EFH63: Using or adapting models built and knowledge obtained from environmental flows assessments and early actions, assess the predicted impacts of potential management options, singly or in combination.		What is underway?
EFH64: Select a set of priority scenarios to undertake more detailed evaluation including assessing what impact each has on the achievement of key selected ecological and traditional use objectives/outcomes (using indicators as identified above, such as muskrat).		
EFH65: Assess the impact of priority scenarios on interests upstream and downstream of the PAD.		
EFH66: Impact assessment and detailed analyses of desired management options.		
EFH67: Recommend the preferred management approach(es) to the relevant jurisdictional authorities that could support achieving the ecological and traditional use EFH objectives.		

ACTION	**ACFN** Comment/Information Request	**MCFN** Comment / Information Request
EFH68: Continue to monitor and adapt toward achieving the desired outcomes.		
Goal: To establish a Knowledge Hub to make Peace–Athabasca Delta information and data from science-based and Indigenous Knowledge sources more easily accessible.		Require a TOR with details of what is in scope and out of scope, so Nations do not lose autonomy over data, process, and/or decision-making around monitoring & science.
EFH69: Complete a user-needs survey to assess what type of information and presentation the various users require or want.		
EFH70: Establish an appropriate knowledge hub platform, informed by similar existing resources (e.g., Mackenzie Data Stream) that targets needs without creating redundancies.		
EFH71: Establish data sharing protocols.		
EFH72: Develop a basic ethics and data sharing agreement that can be adapted as needed.		
EFH73: Update knowledge hub routinely with monitoring and study data from within Wood Buffalo NP.		
EFH74: Establish communication mechanisms and frequency to exchange information with (a) communities, (b) jurisdictions and governments, and (c) stakeholders and the general public.		
EFH75: Regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of the Knowledge Hub and ensure links are up to date.		
THEME: Monitoring and Science (MS)		
OUTCOME: An Integrated PAD Research and Monitoring program (using both WS and IK), supported by a community-based research and monitoring hub, is implemented to detect cumulative effects on the PAD and to generate information that informs land-use management and regulatory decision making.		
MS1: Coordinate PAD Research and Monitoring Workshops; develop and implement integrated PAD Research and Monitoring Program.		
MS2: Initiate annual PAD Symposium to share findings of PAD-related science and monitoring work underway by various organizations.		
MS3: Develop targets, indicators and specific objectives (using science-based and Indigenous Knowledge) required to evaluate the status and trend of the elements of OUV of Wood Buffalo NP.		
MS4: Undertake Wetland Classification of the PAD and of Wood Buffalo NP to support ecological assessments of the PAD and other wetlands within Wood Buffalo NP.		

ACTION	**ACFN** Comment/Information Request	**MCFN** Comment / Information Request
MS5: Obtain high-resolution digital terrain imagery of the PAD.		
MS6: Advance the concept of a PAD monitoring hub to support better integration of science-based and Indigenous Knowledge of the PAD.		
MS7: Develop periodic State of the PAD reports.		
MS8: Expand invasive species monitoring and management to the Salt Plains as part of ongoing vegetation monitoring in Wood Buffalo NP.		
MS9: Continue to monitor environmental indicators in the PAD through the Oil Sands Monitoring Program under the programs' scope, mandate and governance structure. Ensure this monitoring and reporting is coordinated with and leveraged as needed with the actions throughout this plan.		
THEME: Wildlife and Habitat Conservation (WH)		
OUTCOME: Support the recovery of wood bison and whooping crane within and beyond Wood Buffalo NP through the implementation of recovery actions and species management in collaboration with Indigenous groups and using Indigenous Knowledge.		
WH1: Complete the Recovery Strategy for Wood Bison.		
WH2: Undertake an Imminent Threat Assessment for Ronald Lake and Wabasca wood bison herds.		
WH3: Launch a collaborative multi-stakeholder bison disease management planning group to examine options and coordinate activities aimed at eliminating the risk of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis transmission.		
WH4: Develop one or more Action Plans for wood bison.		
WH5: Begin work to identify critical habitat for wood bison.		
WH6: Develop a cooperative management arrangement with Indigenous communities, to help support traditional land use and cultural values, including the exercise of rights recognized under section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982, on the management of the Ronald Lake Bison Herd in conjunction with the BSA and adjacent conservation areas.	WH6 – ACFN acknowledges the existence of a Cooperative Management Committee, but this doesn't in anyway represent a "cooperative management arrangement". Therefore, it is incorrect to categorise this as a completed action.	
WH7: Develop an Indigenous Knowledge Research Process to complement the Ronald Lake Bison Herd Technical Team.		

ACTION	**ACFN** Comment/Information Request	**MCFN** Comment / Information Request
WH8: Continue to monitor the nesting area of the whooping crane within Wood Buffalo NP and its wider ecosystem.		
WH9: Conduct high-resolution remote sensing to assess the extent and use of whooping crane breeding habitat.		
WH10: Update critical habitat identification for whooping crane.		
WH11: Identify landing and stopover sites used by whooping cranes within the oil sands region during migration.		This is incomplete. The Oil Sands Monitoring Program does not have any programs relating to Whooping crane stopover sites within the oil sands region. Data on landings within operator sites, including on tailings ponds, are collected by operators and reported to the AER. However, these data are not shared outside of the Alberta Energy Regulator.