

# WHAT YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD

## About Alberta's Plan to "Optimize Alberta Parks"

Through a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) request, CPAWS obtained the official documents used by the Government of Alberta to inform their decision to delist 164 and close 20 provincial parks. The documents reveal that **the government has not been completely honest about their plan for Alberta's parks.**

### The Facts

- 1** The government's plan to delist Alberta Parks included removing their protected area status, selling lands to private operators or transferring them to vacant public land
- 2** The government was advised that this plan does not align with the overall intent of the parks system
- 3** There is insufficient data to understand the impacts these decisions will have on the budget
- 4** The government ignored advice to conduct broad public consultation and engagement on this plan

### What This Means

Despite the Minister's statements after the plan's release, selling parks land after it was delisted was part of the government's original plan. Private land owners or operators are not required to maintain environmental protections to the same standard and may not have the capacity to do so.

The government has yet to justify how this plan will help achieve Alberta Parks' goal to "conserve Alberta's landscapes for current and future generations."

The actual criteria used to select parks does not line up with the justification that the government is using. This decision was not made to save Albertans money, despite this being the only rationale provided for the decision. Some parts of the document indicate that divesting park assets may cost more in the end.

The Minister opted to exclude Albertans from this decision, despite being advised that public and stakeholder groups were likely to be concerned about the changes. It is more important than ever that we make our voices heard now.

### The Proof

In a briefing presentation to the Minister of Environment and Parks, a risk analysis for the parks plan was reported. The budget impacts of the plan could not be estimated due to lack of financial data.

The government was also advised of the risk that the changes "don't make sense or align with broader system outcomes."

The FOIP document clearly states that sale of lands was always part of the plan. Over 100 parks were never intended to be transferred to partners, but rather left as unprotected vacant public land.

For a full summary of the FOIP document, visit:  
<https://cpaws-southernalberta.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/What-you-havent-been-told-Combined.pdf>



### What You Can Do

It is more important than ever that you raise your concerns about the "Optimizing Alberta Parks" plan to your local government representative and representatives of ridings where you visit parks. **Send a letter to your MLA at [bit.ly/DefendABParks](https://bit.ly/DefendABParks)** to let them know you do not agree with this plan!