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Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation – Mikisew Cree First Nation Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Stewardship Plan

for the Richardson, Red Earth, East Side of the Athabasca River and West Side of the Athabasca River Boreal Caribou Ranges





“We protect the area that we love, we use the resources that are out there. Our resources happen to be birds, plants, buffalo, moose. [It is the] same with Alberta, but their resources happen to be minerals, oil, and they are using their resources as well. We should be able to manage those resources.”

–MCFN member, 2019 Workshop



Our Homelands

- Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and Mikisew Cree First Nation are sovereign nations of their homelands
- Responsible for stewarding the lands and waters of our homelands
- Our homelands must be managed through Dené and Cree Laws





PHOTO CREDIT FIRELIGHT

Need for Meaningful Action

- Canada is a signatory to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
- Tâdzié / sagow atihk populations continue to decline
- Boreal wetlands continue to be lost
- Little being done to stop these losses

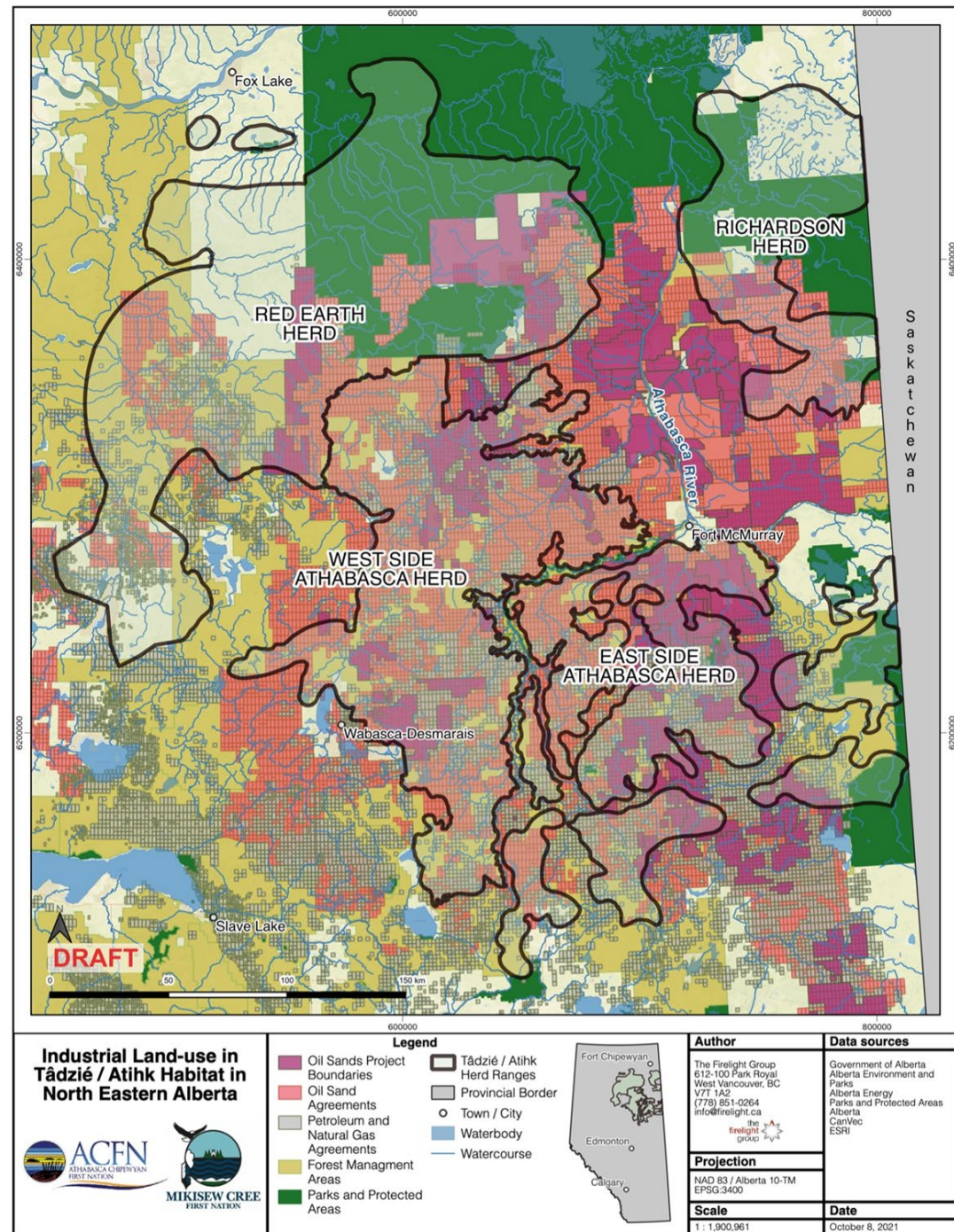


“They [industry] are taking more land and taking more of the habitat that the caribou need ... They get away from that industry and they’re going farther west and they are going farther east. Where it is quiet, where they can raise their kids actually. And have that freedom again. And if we don’t do something about them, we are going to have nothing again.” –ACFN member, October 2, 2020



Status of Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk in Northeastern Alberta

- Populations are being pushed to the brink of extirpation
- Listed as threatened species
- Lack of effective range plans to protect critical habitat
- None of the ranges in Alberta meet the critical habitat condition threshold



What We Heard From Elders and Knowledge Holders

- Follow Dené and Cree laws and stewardship protocols
- Elders Declaration that asserts authority, jurisdiction and legal framework
- Everything is guided by the Dené and Cree laws, stewardship protocols and Elders Declaration
- Populations and habitat need to be replenished and restored



Methods Used In Developing The Plan

- Indigenous knowledge was put front and centre
- Western science data and knowledge informed planning
- Indigenous knowledge and western science on both used to support tâdzié / sagow atihk recovery
- Maximize benefits for tâdzié / sagow atihk and minimize conflicts with industrial development



Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Stewardship Plan Goal

Recover tâdzié / sagow atihk populations to the extent that ACFN and MCFN can once again rely on tâdzié / sagow atihk for subsistence and cultural practices. This full goal must be met in no longer than 40 years, with measurable and verified progress being achieved in set periods within that timeline. To meet this goal, knowledge holders identified a target of 80% undisturbed habitat within tâdzié / sagow atihk ranges by 2061, with calving habitats targeted at 100% disturbance free. In addition to being disturbance free, this habitat must contain all of the qualities required by tâdzié / sagow atihk to meet their needs throughout each season.

Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Stewardship Plan Principles

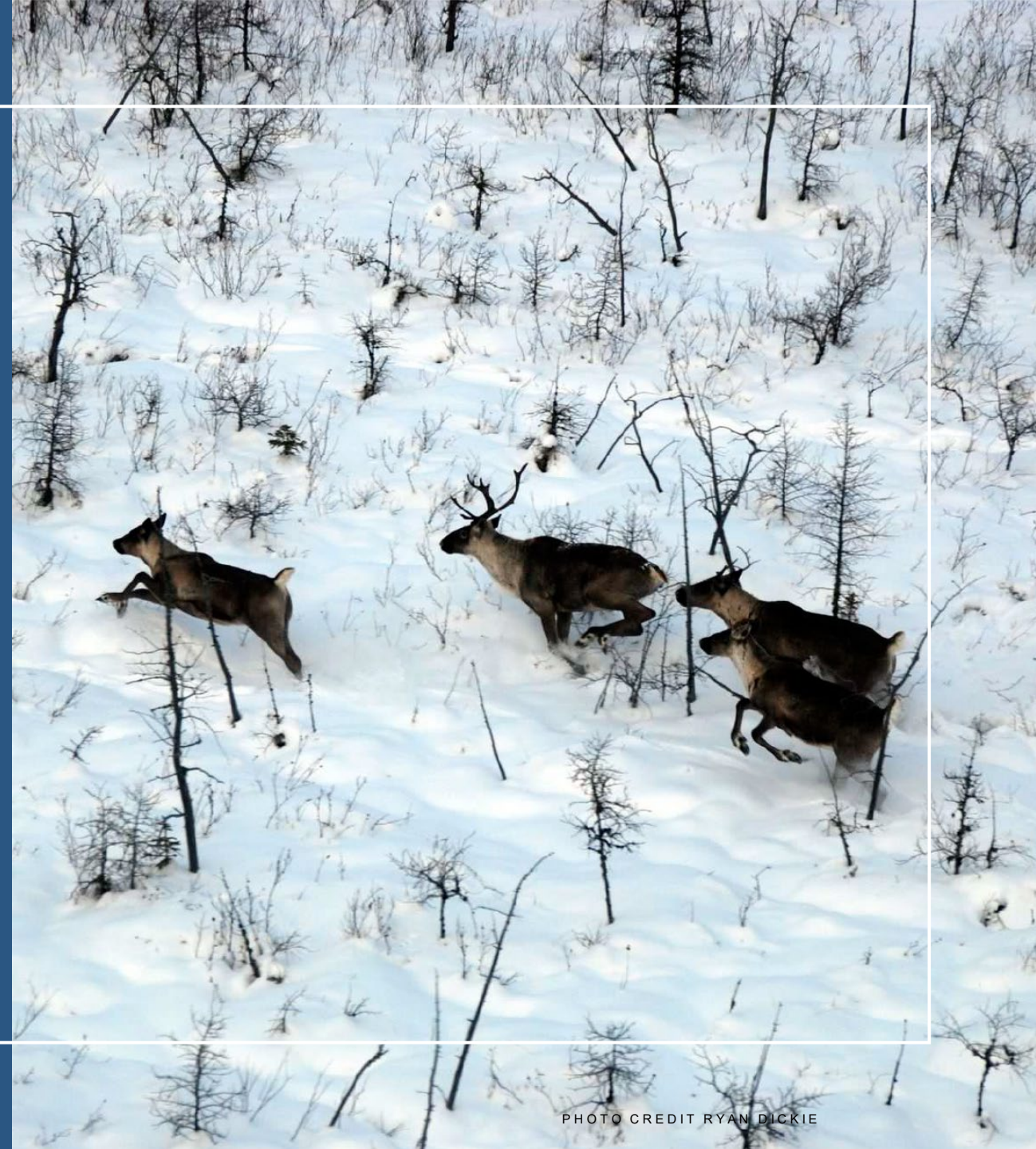
- ACFN and MCFN inherent rights and oral Treaty signing must be included in any actions to recover tâdzié / sagow atihk populations and habitat. Ongoing planning for tâdzié / sagow atihk recovery needs to be guided by the knowledge of the two nations.
- Indigenous knowledge must be held at an equal weight to western science within the range planning process.
- There needs to be enough habitat protected to support healthy caribou populations and a healthy environment. This includes restoring disturbed habitat and protecting intact habitat—particularly habitat that contains the qualities required by tâdzié / sagow atihk to meet their needs throughout each season.

Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Stewardship Plan Principles

- Woodland caribou are a migratory species and all of the local populations were historically interconnected. There should be equal priority / protection for all caribou ranges in Alberta.
- Caribou population numbers cycle over time with habitat availability; this cycle should be maintained by ensuring sufficient, appropriate and connected habitat is available to support healthy caribou populations.

Difficulties Faced by Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk

- High levels of habitat disturbance
- Conflict between protecting tâdzié / sagow atihk and supporting industrial development
- Industrial leases cover a high percentage of the ranges





Four Core Actions

1. Elders Declaration
2. Stewardship Zones
3. Guardianship Program
4. Stewardship Protocols



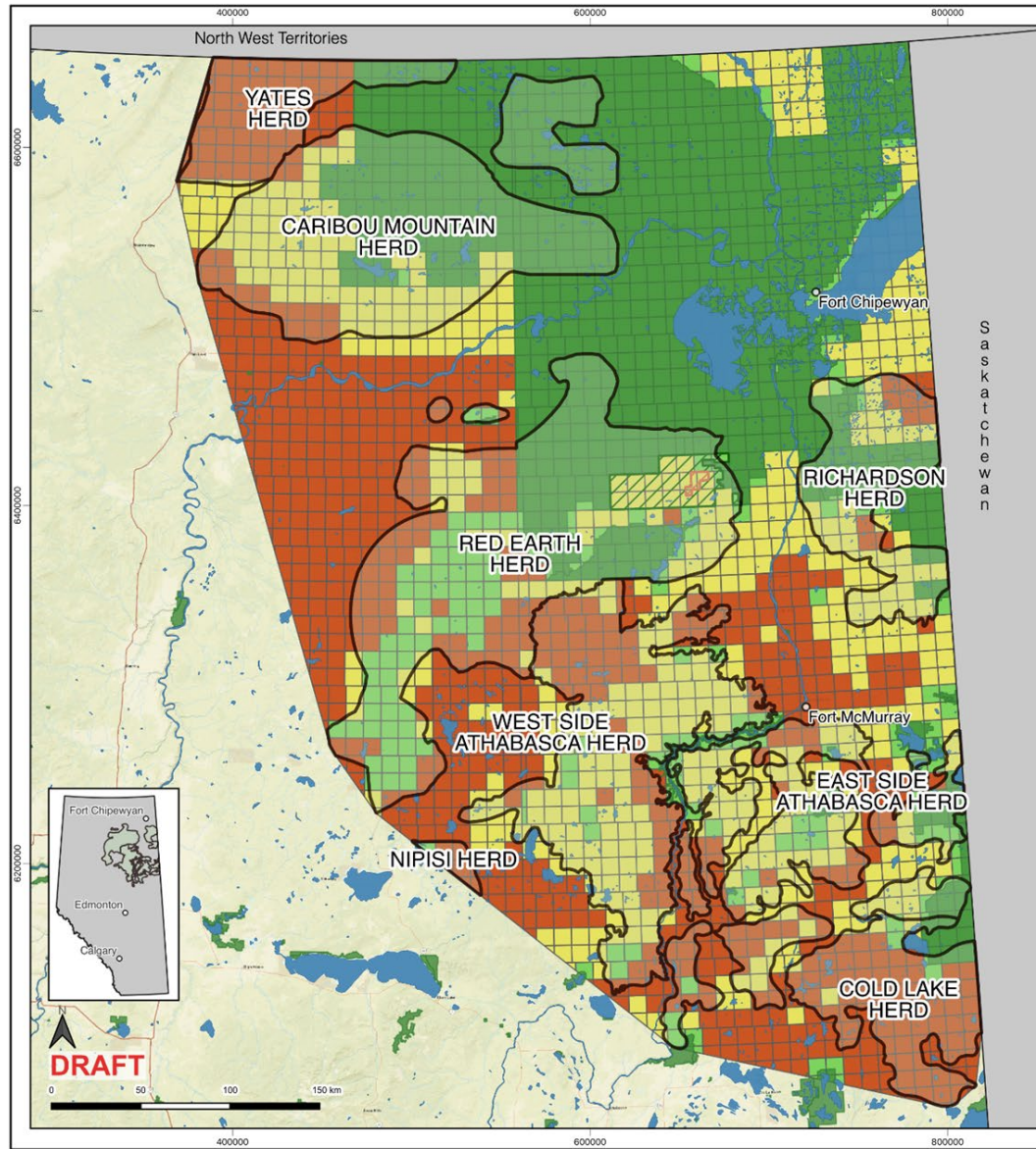
1. Elders Declaration

- Legal document that needs to be followed
- Describes our authority, jurisdiction, rights and responsibilities to the stewardship of tãdzié / sagow atihk
- Informs standards for tãdzié / sagow atihk management based on:
 - Our values
 - Dené and Cree Laws
 - Stewardship protocols

2. Stewardship Zones

- Stewardship zones to protect and restore habitat
- Used data and information from Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science
- Methods:
 - Compile data and information
 - Create planning blocks
 - Apply rules to identify stewardship zones





**Draft ACFN and MCFN
Tādzié / Atihk Stewardship
Zones**



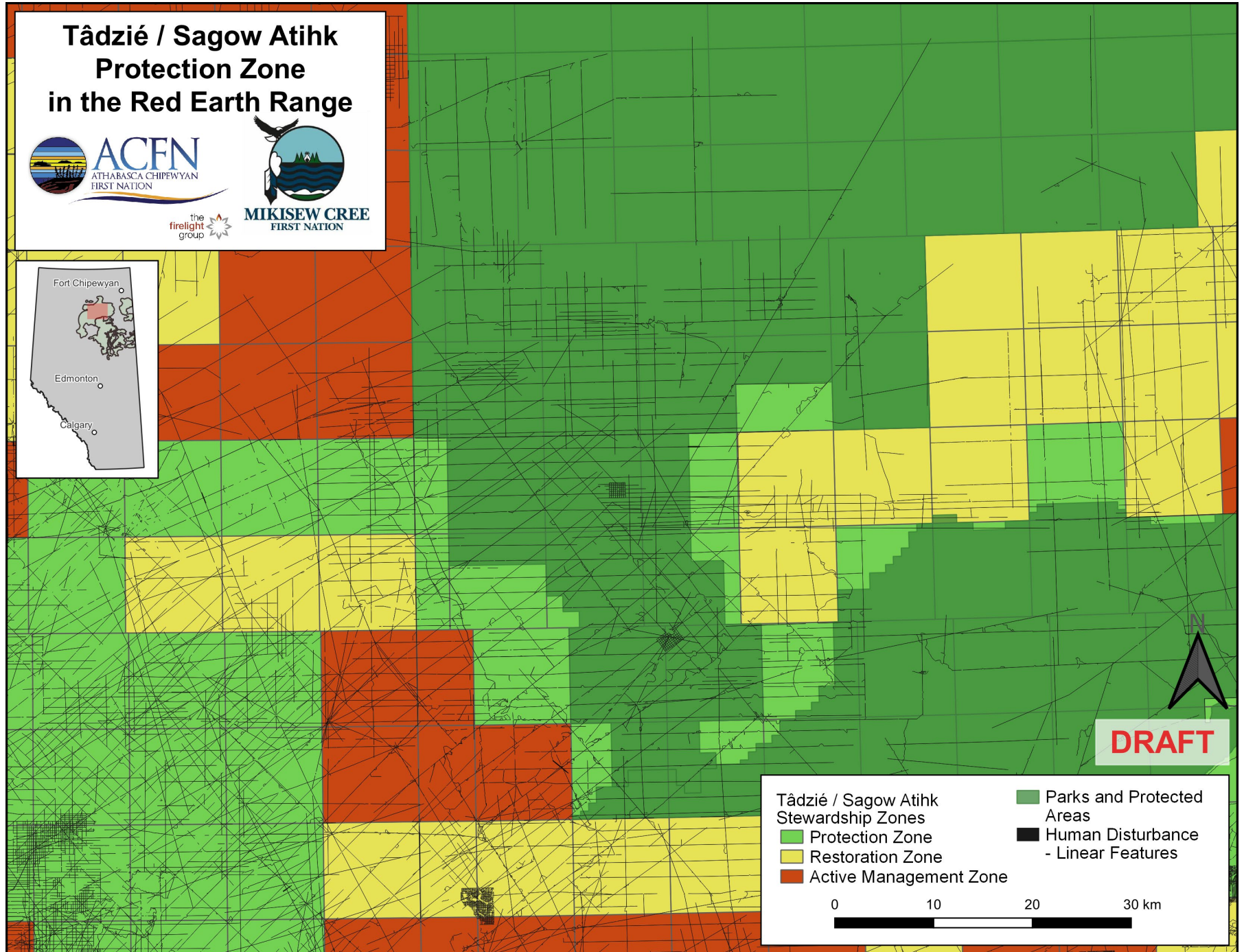
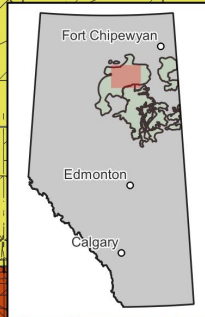
- Tādzié / Atihk Stewardship Zones**
- Protection Zone
 - Restoration Zone
 - Active Management Zone
 - Tādzié / Atihk Herd Range
 - Parks and Protected Areas
- Legend**
- Kitaskino Nuwenéné Wildland Provincial Park (2021 Expansion)
 - Proposed Addition to Kitaskino Nuwenéné Wildland Provincial Park
 - Provincial Border
 - Waterbody

Author	Data sources
The Firelight Group 612-100 Park Royal West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2 (778) 851-0264 info@firelight.ca	Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Mikisew Cree First Nation Government of Alberta Ducks Unlimited Canada CanVec Alberta Environment and Parks Parks and Protected Areas Alberta Energy GeoBase Natural Resources Canada ESRI
Projection	Date
NAD 83 / Alberta 10-TM EPSG:3400	October 21, 2021
Scale	
1 : 2,801,416	

Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Protection Zone in the Red Earth Range



MIKISEW CREE
FIRST NATION



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Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Stewardship Zones	■ Parks and Protected Areas
■ Protection Zone	■ Human Disturbance - Linear Features
■ Restoration Zone	
■ Active Management Zone	

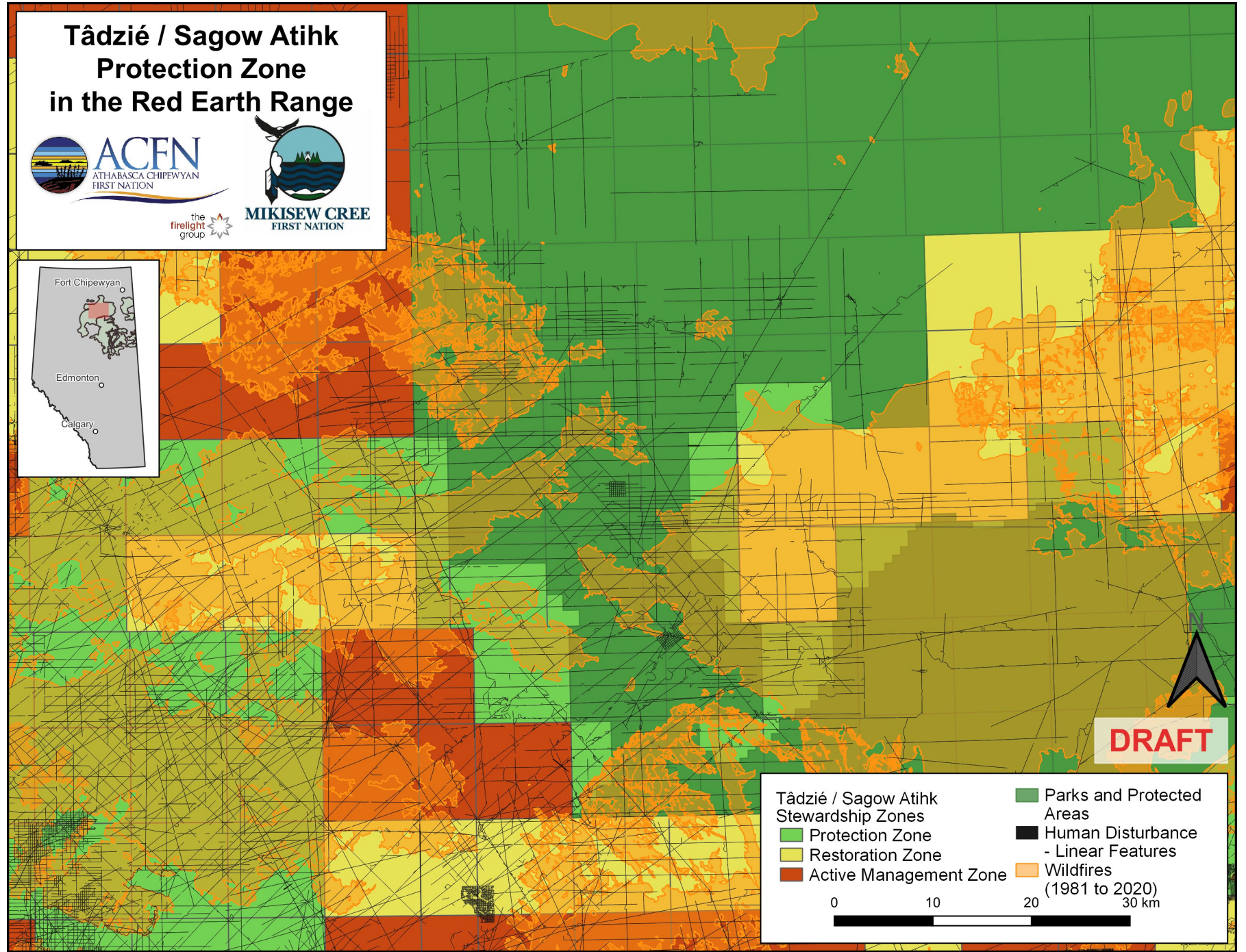
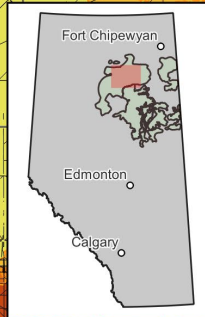
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Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Protection Zone in the Red Earth Range



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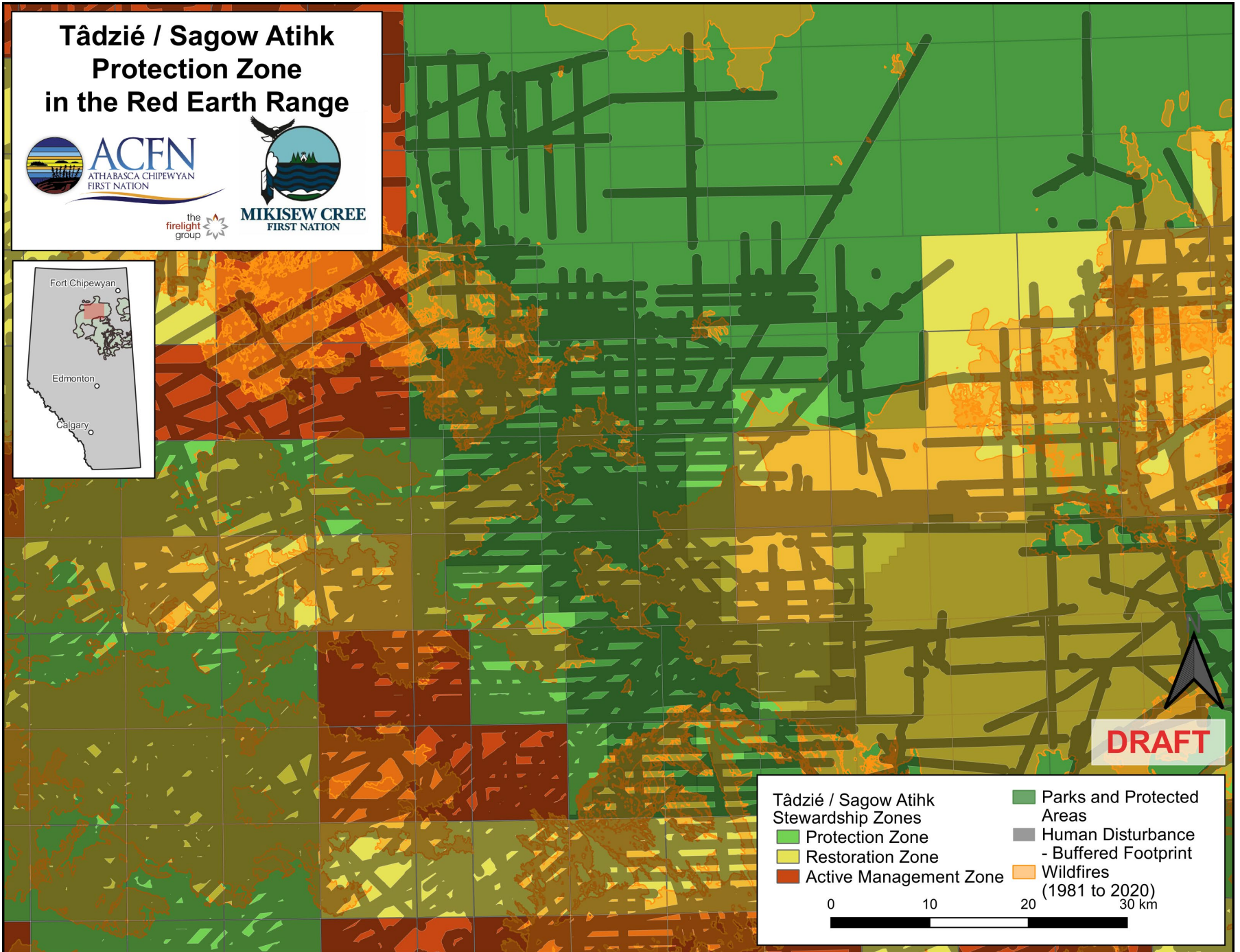
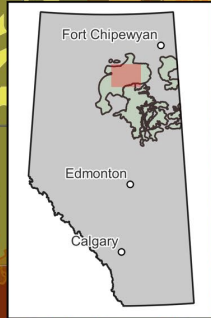
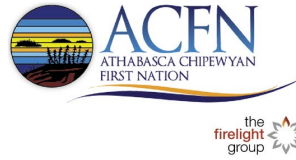


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Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Stewardship Zones	■ Parks and Protected Areas
■ Protection Zone	■ Human Disturbance - Linear Features
■ Restoration Zone	■ Wildfires (1981 to 2020)
■ Active Management Zone	

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Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Protection Zone in the Red Earth Range



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Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Stewardship Zones	■ Parks and Protected Areas
■ Protection Zone	■ Human Disturbance - Buffered Footprint
■ Restoration Zone	■ Wildfires (1981 to 2020)
■ Active Management Zone	

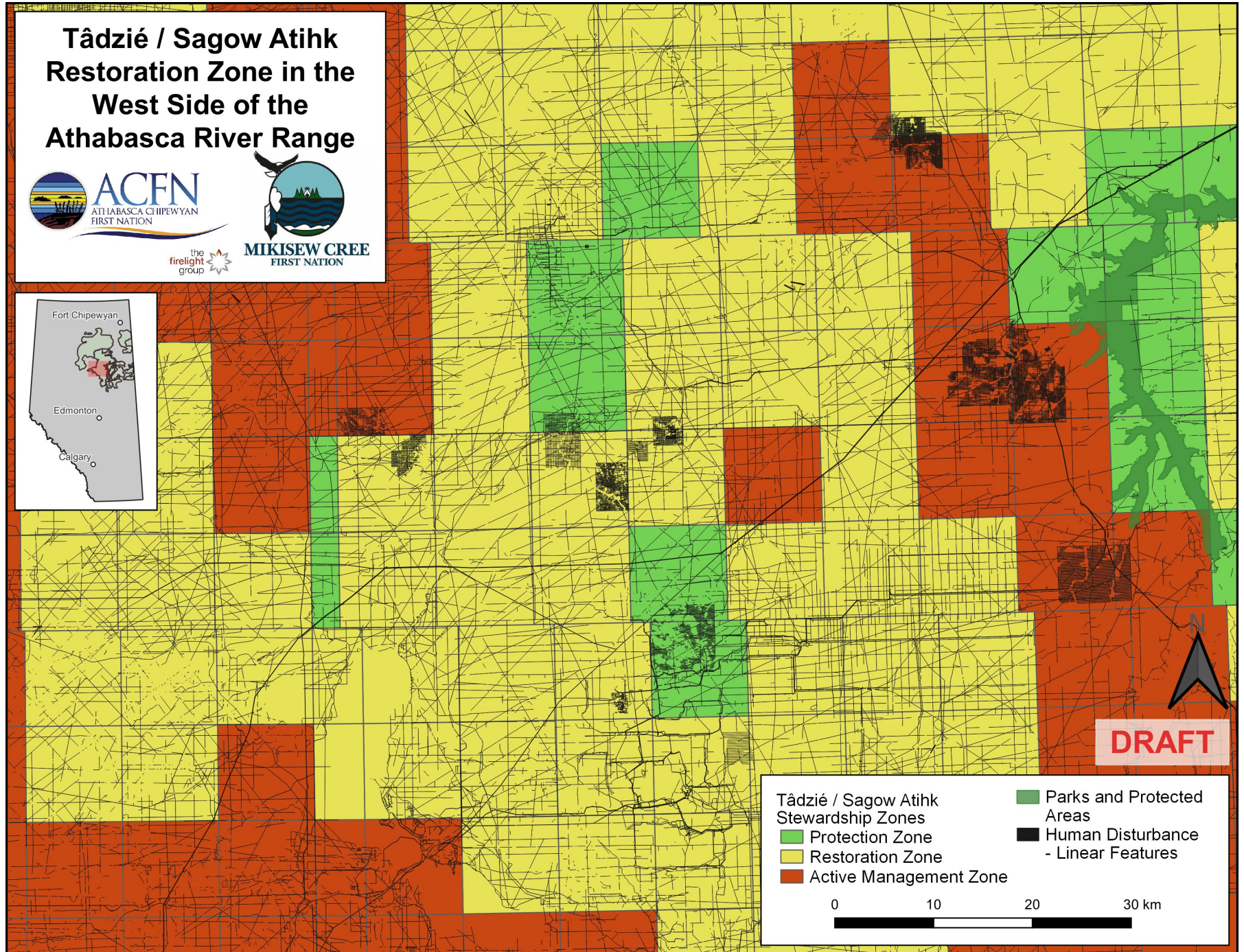
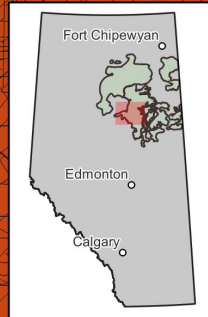
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Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Restoration Zone in the West Side of the Athabasca River Range



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Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Stewardship Zones	Parks and Protected Areas
Protection Zone	Human Disturbance - Linear Features
Restoration Zone	
Active Management Zone	

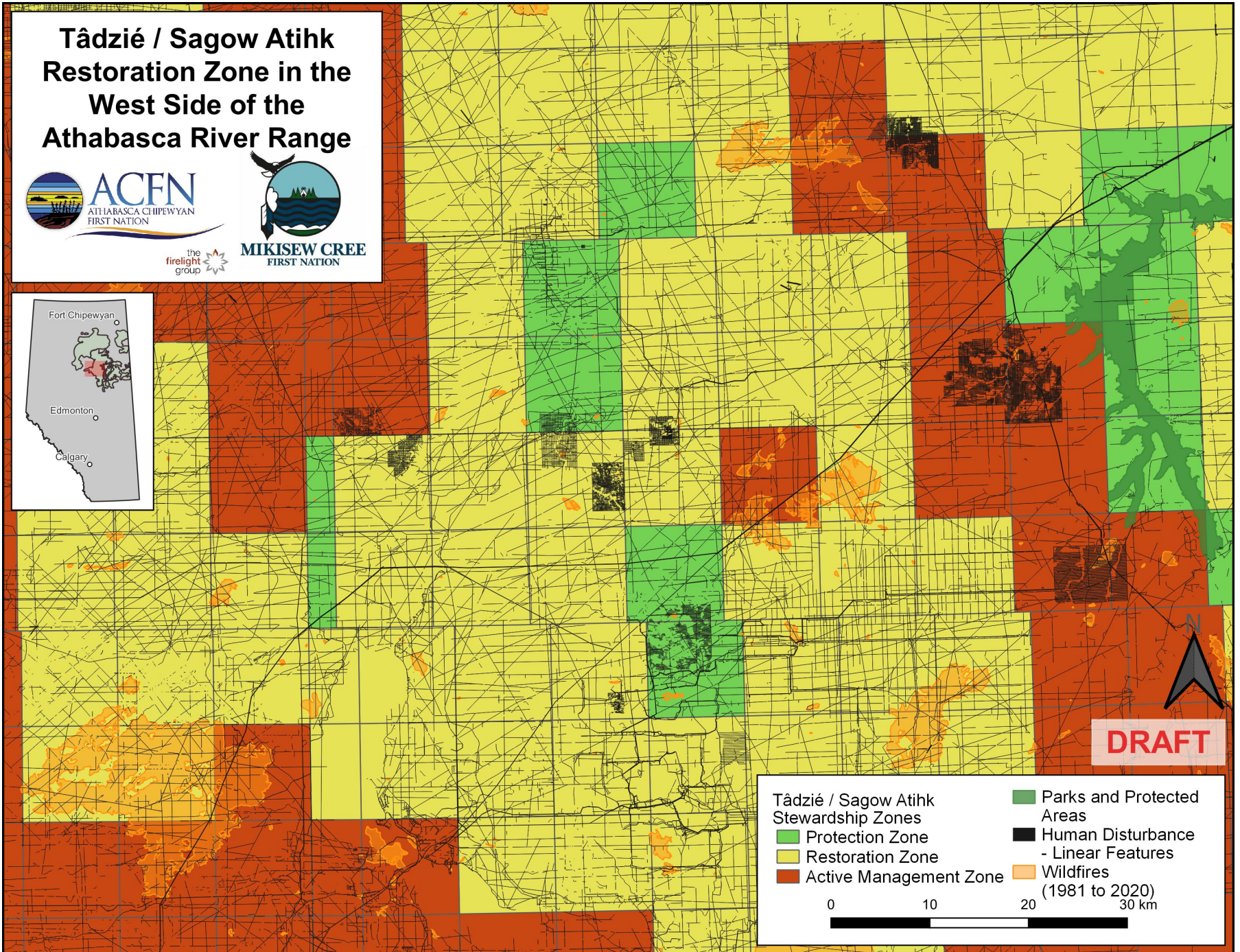
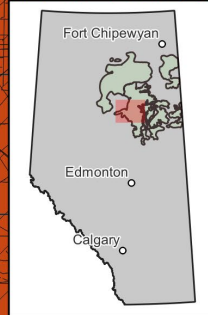
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Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Restoration Zone in the West Side of the Athabasca River Range



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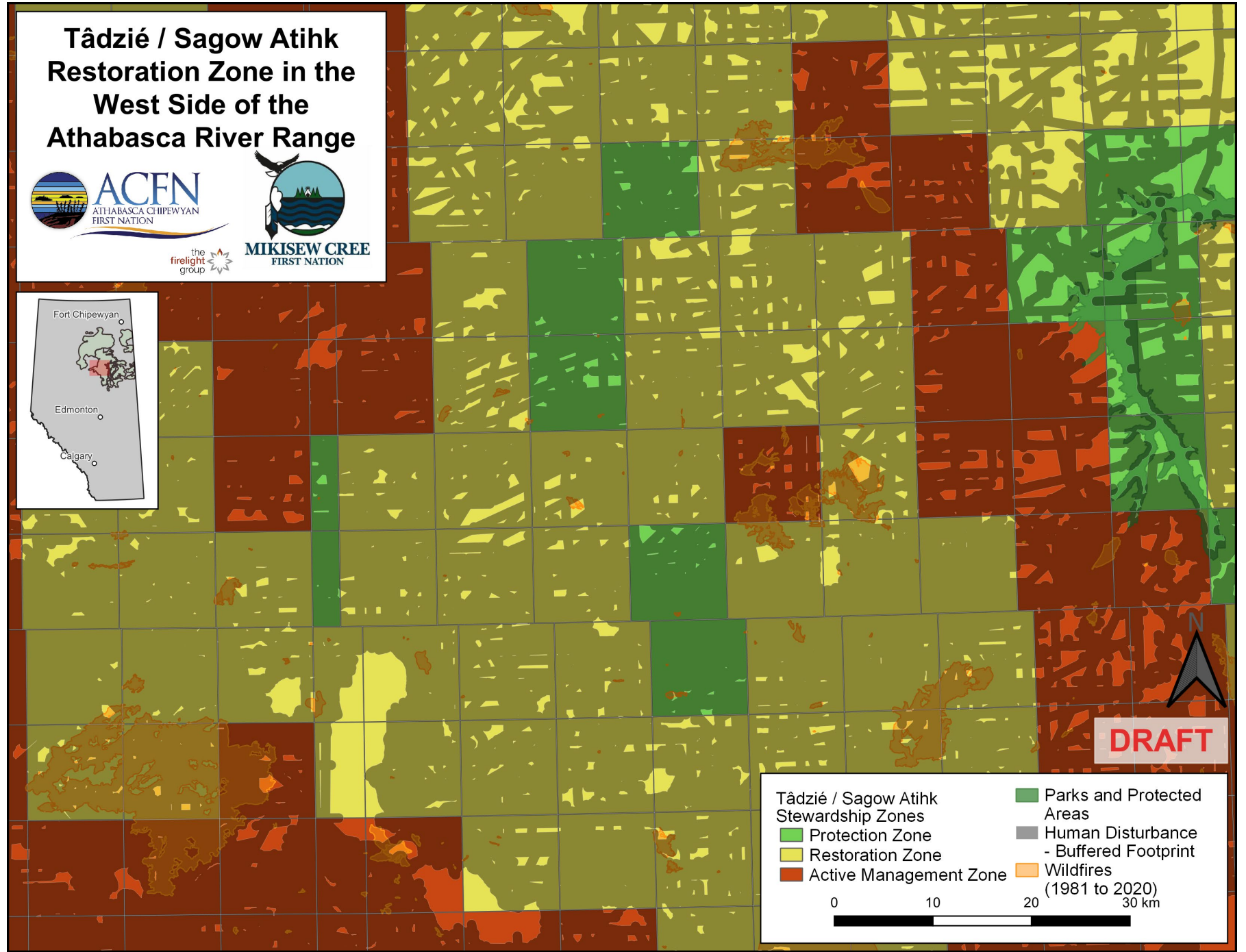
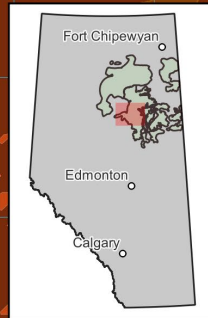
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Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Restoration Zone in the West Side of the Athabasca River Range



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Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Stewardship Zones

Protection Zone	Parks and Protected Areas
Restoration Zone	Human Disturbance - Buffered Footprint
Active Management Zone	Wildfires (1981 to 2020)

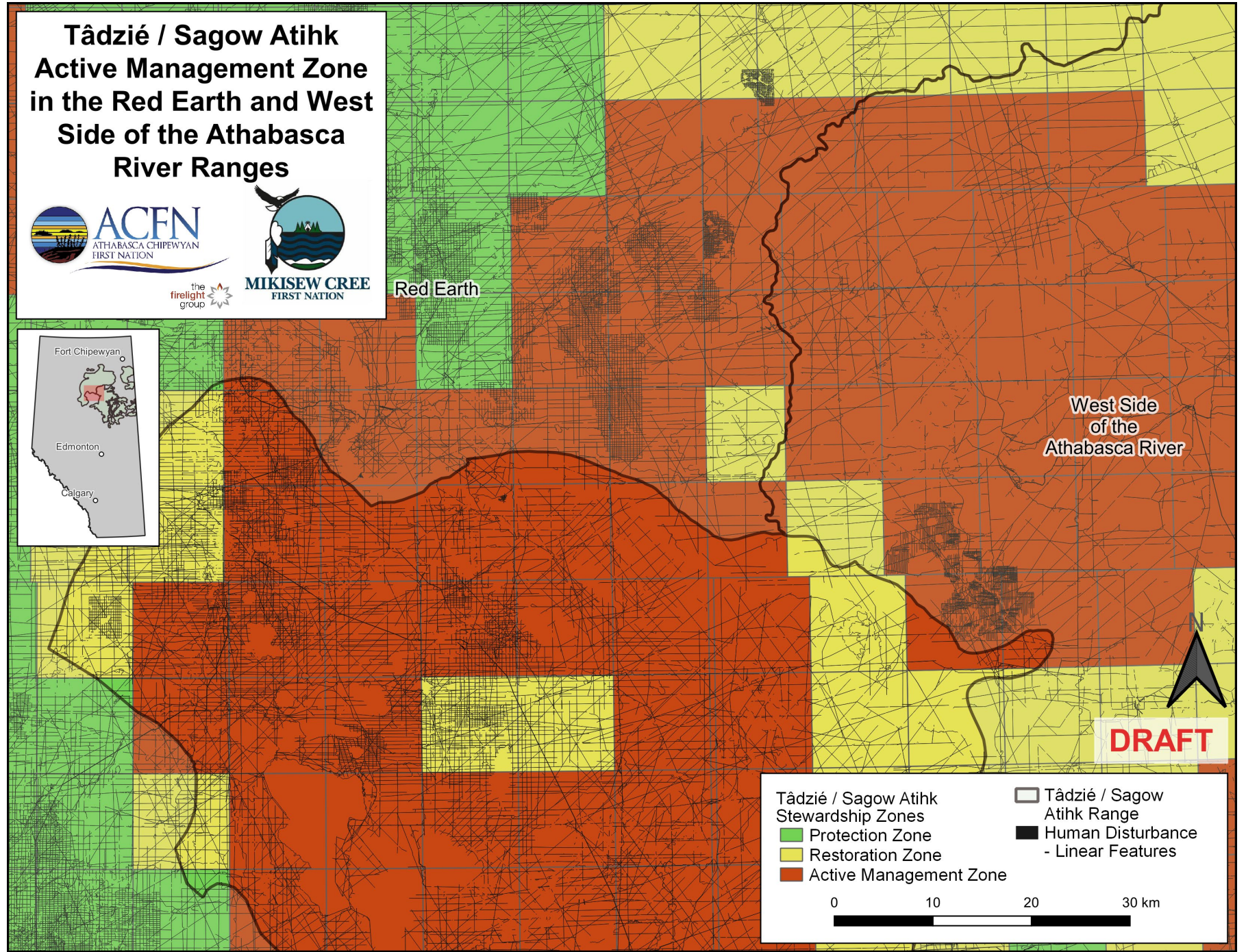
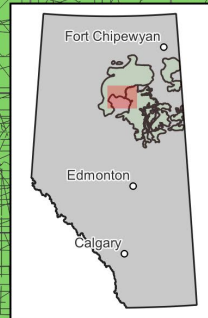
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Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Active Management Zone in the Red Earth and West Side of the Athabasca River Ranges



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FIRST NATION



Red Earth

West Side
of the
Athabasca River

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Tâdzié / Sagow Stewardship Zones	□ Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Range
■ Protection Zone	■ Human Disturbance - Linear Features
■ Restoration Zone	
■ Active Management Zone	

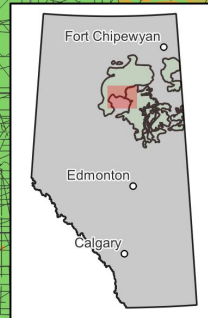
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Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Active Management Zone in the Red Earth and West Side of the Athabasca River Ranges



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FIRST NATION

Red Earth



West Side
of the
Athabasca River

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|--|---------------------------------------|
| Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Stewardship Zones | □ Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Range |
| ■ Protection Zone | ■ Human Disturbance - Linear Features |
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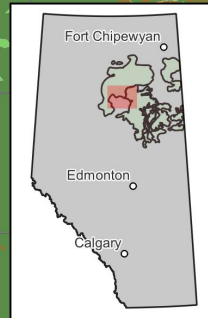
Tâdzié / Sagow Atihk Active Management Zone in the Red Earth and West Side of the Athabasca River Ranges



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MIKISEW CREE
FIRST NATION

Red Earth



West Side
of the
Athabasca River

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0 10 20 30 km



3. Guardianship

- Boots on the ground monitoring
- Led by Elders and knowledge holders
- Follow Dené and Cree Laws
- Guided by our stewardship values and protocols
- Involve our community members
- Involve our youth and help reconnect them to the land and tãdzié / sagow atihk

4. Stewardship Protocols

- Stewardship protocols protect our inherent rights and Treaty rights
- All governments and organizations working within our homelands will need to follow appropriate stewardship protocols





Cultural Training

- Governments, industry and other organizations working in our homelands will be required to take cultural training
- Provides an understanding of Dené and Cree culture and protocols

Industrial Guidance to Reduce Development Footprint

- Coordinated Access Management Plans
- Aggregated forestry
- Appended development
- Disturbance thresholds





Tenure Management

- Existing tenures make it difficult to fully protect tâdzié / sagow atihk habitat
- Buy-back tenure in high value tâdzié / sagow atihk habitat

Restoration

- Immediate action to restore all non-permanent industrial features
- Prioritize restoration in areas to efficiently meet undisturbed habitat targets
- Measurable and enforceable targets for restoring impacted areas
- Protecting restored areas from development in the future





Offsetting

- Allow for restoration in other areas
- Ideally restore areas within the range of the impacted population
- Cannot be used to allow development beyond disturbance thresholds

Wildfire Management

- Increasing wildfire severity and frequency means their impacts are more severe for scarce intact tãdzié / sagow atihk habitat
- Wildfire fighting must be a short-term priority until other areas of tãdzié / sagow atihk habitat has had sufficient time to recover



Why is this the plan that should be followed?

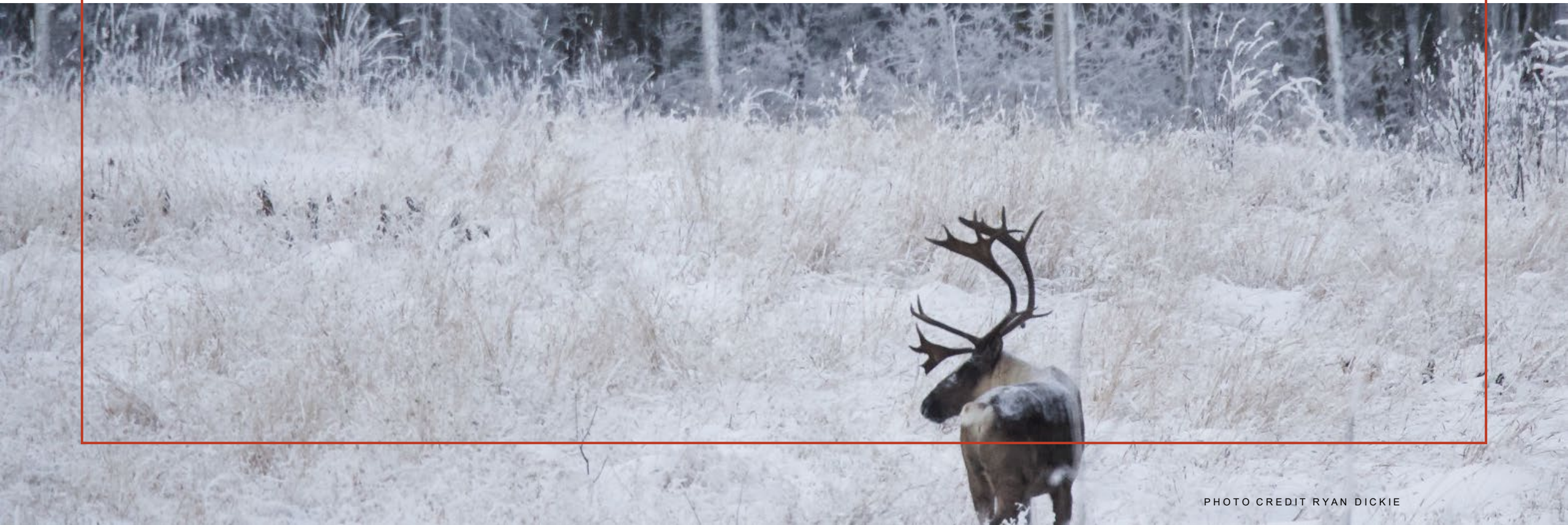


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Next Steps

- Refining the stewardship zones
- Meeting with governments to identify approaches for implementing the stewardship zones
- Rebuilding and refining Guardianship and monitoring programs
- Working with the province and industry to action management measures in the restoration zone
- Finalize the Stewardship Protocols
- Establish a wildlife management board with Indigenous communities and organizations





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