File: 19300-20/Elephant Hill

February 9, 2018

VIA EMAIL

To: Forest licensees operating in the Kamloops and 100 Mile House TSAs

Re: Timber Salvage Principles for Elephant Hill Wildfire

As you know, BC experienced unprecedented wildfires in 2017 and the Elephant Hill wildfire has significantly impacted both the Kamloops and 100 Mile House Timber Supply Areas (TSAs).

At our December 6, 2017, Joint TSA meeting we shared that since July, the Province has been working collaboratively with the Indigenous Communities impacted by the Elephant Hill wildfire. We have formed the *Elephant Hill Wildfire Joint Leadership Council* – a table that both District Managers and Operations staff sit at with the leaders of those impacted Indigenous Communities. We've also formed the *Elephant Hill Wildfire Joint Technical Working Group* which brings together Provincial and First Nations technical staff to work together on various issues related to post-wildfire recovery.

Our goal in working together is a long-term, strategic and landscape level approach to post-wildfire recovery, where those Indigenous Communities have a central role in determining what post-wildfire recovery looks like and are involved in the recovery efforts. As we work together, we are using the principle of "walking on two legs: western science and First Nations science together". We believe this approach is an example of our Government's commitment to true and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous Communities.

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

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While we expect our post-wildfire work to take many years, we recognize the urgency of getting to work quickly. We've already worked together on replacing critical range fences and completing critical rehabilitation work. One of the next most urgent recovery-related activity is timber salvage. We are cognizant of the fact that the economic value of the burned timber will not last, and know many of you are already working on your salvage plans. To support your work in timber salvage planning, the Elephant Hill Wildfire Joint Leadership Council has endorsed a set of specific salvage principles to guide retention planning and timber salvage for the Elephant Hill fire (attached).

The Elephant Hill Timber Salvage Principles align with the "Post-Natural Disturbance Forest Retention Guidance" (https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/forestry/2017_fire_report_revised.pdf) recently released by the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD). One of the key messages is that planning should focus on what to retain, rather than on what to log. This approach is reflected in the attached Elephant Hill Timber Salvage principles.

We recognize that these principles do not form legal direction. We do however want you to understand that these principles represent a consensus by Ministry staff and First Nations about how to best recover ecological values on the land base. They also represent a way that First Nations rights and interests can be addressed during post-wildfire timber salvage activities. Following this direction does not remove the necessity to engage with First Nations communities directly on your salvage plans, and we are working on a strategic approach to facilitate that process going forward.

These principles are intended to be dynamic and may be revised/improved upon as land based recovery activities progress. We wanted to get these principles in your hands as quickly as possible and recognize that you will likely have many questions about how to implement them. We want to provide the opportunity to bring our Elephant Hill Joint TSA Licensee Subcommittee together soon. The focus of this meeting would be to present further context and information behind each of the 12 principles, and allow for a conversation about how to best apply these principles. We will try to secure a date for this meeting in later February or early March. We welcome your thoughts on timing and content of that meeting.

We also want to provide you with further information that may be helpful. We've established an FTP site (https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/DHW/external/!publish/Fires_2017/) where technical information related to Elephant Hill recovery will be stored. We will put a copy of this document on the FTP site, as well as:

- Shapefiles for the values addressed by the attached principles
- A paper written by Rita Winkler (FLNRORD Research Hydrologist based in Kamloops): a short overview of post-wildfire hydrology and recommendations for salvage logging. We believe this document complements the attached timber salvage principles.

To: Licensees operating in the Kamloops and 100 Mile House TSAs

We will continue to add information and guidance to this central spot as it is developed/becomes available.

We look forward to meeting with you at our next Elephant Hill Joint TSA Licensee Subcommittee meeting. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to reach out to either of us or our staff if you have questions about this guidance.

Kind regards,

Pat Byrne
District Manager
100 Mile House District

Rachael Pollard
District Manager
Thompson Rivers District

Attachment(s): Elephant Hill Timber Salvage Principles

Elephant Hill Wildfire Recovery Joint Leadership Council
Principles for Timber Salvage

The 2017 Wildfire season has been the most damaging and challenging wildfire season in the Province's history. The Elephant Hill wildfire complex has had severe impacts to the landscape. The Recovery of the land and its ecosystems will be guided by strategic and collaboratively developed recovery plans.

To support timber salvage with an ecosystem-based approach, the Joint Technical Working Group, under guidance from the Elephant Hill Wildfire Recovery Joint Leadership Council, has developed a first version of principles for timber salvage within the Elephant Hill wildfire complex perimeter.

1. No harvesting in OGMA's
2. No green trees harvested unless for safety[1]
3. No operating in known archaeological and/or cultural heritage sites. Buffer size to be determined by working with applicable communities and will be site specific.
4. The Skeetchestn Cultural Resource Management Zones (CRMZ's) will be applied to streams, lakes, wetlands, and marshes. Since attenuation of water flow, sediment control and shading are priorities for management, as well as an expected rise in the water table post wildfire is likely, riparian wet areas have been analyzed and mapped. These areas exceed CRMZ's in some cases and retention of both live and dead trees in these areas is proposed. Mapping of these areas will be provided.
5. No salvaging in Hydrologically Sensitive Zones (approximately the snow line at April 1st); This will include the MS, ESSF, SBS and SBPS Bec zones in specific watersheds. Mapping will be provided.
6. No harvesting in live stands (low burn severity areas) in legal and proposed ungulate winter range and consistent with the Cariboo Region signed variance for this objective.
7. No salvage in VQO polygons of Retention or Preservation
8. No salvage on slopes >40% regardless of severity burn areas and no salvage on slopes >30% on high severity areas. Mapping will be provided
9. No reforestation in areas identified as Grasslands Benchmark Areas[2]
10. Harvest blocks that have already been assessed for Archeological/Cultural Heritage Sites first, if block boundary has not changed since assessments and other guidelines in this document are met
11. Retain trees > 65cm Diameter at Breast Height
12. Review Biodiversity Guidebook for potential guidance and possible implementation[3]

These principles are dynamic and may be improved upon as land based recovery activities progress. The Elephant Hill Wildfire Recovery Joint Leadership Council will work to reach consensus and may modify these principles as needed. Strategic retention proposed by the province may change. Legal objectives that result in retention of the land-base apply unless there is a signed variance.

These principles have been endorsed by the Elephant Hill Wildfire Recovery Joint Leadership Council members on February 5, 2018.

[1] Definition of green trees and green stands will be outlined in a further document
[2] Spatially defined Grassland Benchmark Areas are pending review
[3] More detailed guidance relating to this recommendation is forthcoming