

SUPPLEMENTED by OCT 30/61 policy

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December 14, 1998

Major Licensees and
Small Business Forest Enterprise Program
Lakes Forest District

Dear Sir/Madam:

This letter serves to provide clarification to the various tenure holders operating within the Lakes TSA on the issue of Scenic Area Management.

The purpose is to clarify the topics of; establishment of Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs), introduction of recommended Visual Quality Classes (rVQC), changes to the percent (%) alteration ranges, management of scenic areas and requirements of Visual Impact Assessments.

Visual Quality Objectives

A Visual Quality Objective is a resource management objective established by the District Manager or contained in a higher level plan that reflects the desired level of visual quality based on the physical characteristics and social concerns for the area. The establishment of VQOs requires an analysis of the Visual Landscape Inventory (VLI), including examination of all strategic land use plans or higher level plans, review of social and economic objectives of the Crown, analysis of the potential impact of VQOs on timber supply, and consultation with all stakeholders. This process may coincide with the Districts Landscape Unit planning process. Presently in the Lakes TSA, no known scenic areas have *established VQOs*.



Visual Quality Class

The present Visual Landscape Inventory (VLI) maps show recommended visual quality objectives (rVQOs) as part of the polygon label on the VLI maps. To separate the inventory and analysis process, the rVQO will be removed from the VLI maps and will be replaced with recommended Visual Quality Classes (rVQC). Until analysis of the VLI is conducted in the Lakes, the rVQC will be the benchmark which all proposed blocks within known scenic areas will be evaluated. It is recommended that licensees use the rVQCs when planning how to manage and conserve the resource until such time as VQOs are formally established. The rVQCs are generally analogous to the former rVQOs.

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Ministry of
Forests

Lakes Forest District

Location:
185 Yellowhead Hwy
Burns Lake, BC

Mailing Address:
Bag 3500
Burns Lake, British Columbia
V0J 1E0

Tel: 250-692-2200
Fax: 250-692-7461

Percent Alteration

Based upon the Clearcutting and Visual Quality Study (1996), the following percent alteration ranges in Table 1 were derived for use in perspective view. These ranges are included in the Draft Visual Landscape Management Guidebook to be released shortly.

Table Percent Alteration ranges for each recommended Visual Quality Class

rVQC/ rVQO	% Alteration Perspective view	% Alteration Planimetric view
Preservation	0	0-1
Retention	0-1.5	1-5
Partial Retention	1.6-7.0	6-15
Modification	7.1-18.0	16-25
Max Modification	18.1-30.0	26-40

In all cases forest operations should exhibit elements of good visual design and meet the spirit and intent of the basic definition to achieve a VQO. Percent alteration values are flexible and have been instituted to reduce the impact created as a result of poor design or where there is a disregard for visual resource values. The percent alteration limits prescribed above may be exceeded if it can be demonstrated that the basic definition and design criteria have been met. Refer to the *Visual Landscape Design Training Manual* for information on how to meet fundamental concepts and principles of design, VQO definition and % alteration.

Scenic Areas.

Scenic areas were made *known* by the District Manager in his letter of May 28, 1996.

Over time, known scenic areas will be redefined to better represent the visual resource management priorities of the district. Based on current information a review and update of existing scenic areas and some changes to rVQCs have been carried out for the district. See attached revised list of scenic areas. An updated visual resource map current to December 1998 of the district showing all visual polygons should be available by March 1999..

On the revised list of scenic areas there are a number of new areas, these are identified with an (*). For the purpose of these new scenic areas, according to Section 1, of the Operational Planning Regulations (OPR) "Scenic Areas" are identified through the VLI or higher level plans. In absence of higher level plans the Lakes Forest District will use its VLI to identify scenic areas

Further to the above, Section 1, Subsection 3, of the OPR requires that scenic areas be defined for at least four months prior to a Forest Development Plan (FDP) submission to qualify as *known*. The four month period commences from the date of this letter.

The new scenic areas within the Lakes Forest District are now considered known and are to be used to manage visual resources within the district. In the past the district has been managing all visual resources based on the VLI.

The VLI was also used for calculation of TSR1. By managing the listed scenic areas only, the district will be mitigating some of the visual impacts on timber supply. Buy-back to timber supply from managing the listed scenic areas versus the VLI is estimated to be about 15%. Once mapping has been completed a more accurate buy back percentage will be available.

The VLI is to be considered as best known information available (Operational Planning Regulation, Section 5) and should be used in the preparation of operational plans. The district encourages all tenure holders to consider all visual resources within the district and use the VLI when planning timber harvesting activities. For areas not listed as scenic areas tenure holders should attempt to manage for *good visual design*.

Evaluation of Visual Impacts

Until VQOs have been established the District Manager cannot request a “Visual Impact Assessment”(VIA). However for scenic areas with rVQCs/rVQOs the District Manager may request that tenure holders submit rationale that evaluates the visual impact of cut blocks on which he may base his decision that the visual resources are being managed and conserved adequately FPC Sec.41(2)). The District Manager may request additional information at either the FDP or the SP stage.

The Visual Impact Assessment Guidebook is an excellent tool outlining basic information needs for submissions of rationale, and it is expected that tenure holders use the guidebook as a base.

Some tools available that can be used to assist tenure holders in achieving the rVQC are; photographs, digital terrain models (DTM), visual simulations, sightlines, visual force analysis etc., also refer to the Visual Landscape Design Training Manual for planning and design criteria and other supporting information.

In some cases, where the prescribing forester determines that an evaluation need not be conducted to confirm that the proposed development would meet the rVQC criteria (design, definition, and % alteration), a rationale should be written to support this decision. This supporting rationale will be considered on a case by case basis only.

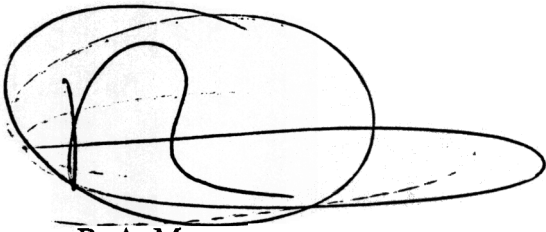
Emphasis should be placed on meeting the criteria for design and definition.

Each visual evaluation submission is unique and the onus is on the tenure holder to assure that the visual information provided will adequately manage the visual resource.

The prescribing forester should include a statement in the Silviculture Prescription (SP) that the SP is consistent with the results and recommendations of the assessment. In the case of the evaluation and the rationale, the end result should be whether the proposed development will meet the criteria of the rVQC.

If you have any questions or concerns about the scenic area designations or submission requirements, please contact Alex Bergen at (250)-692-3913.

Yours Truly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. A. Murray', written over a horizontal line.

R. A. Murray
District Manager
Lakes Forest District

Revised Scenic Area List

Lakes Forest District

Highway 16 corridor (railway, highway, & lakes with in the corridor)	Uncha Lake
Babine Lake	Maxan Lake
Augier Lake	Taltapin Lake
Pinkut Lake	Knapp Lake
Francois Lake	* Bird Lake
Tchesinkut Lake	Takysie Lake
Ootsa Lake	Fleming Lake
Tetachuck Lake	McKenzie Lake
Bulkley Lake	Udak Lake
Cheslatta Lake	* Chief Louis Lake
Boer Mtn. (Star Lake cluster)	Sather Lake
Haney Lake	Binta Lake
Chabourous Lake	Gullwing Lake
Getzuni Lake	Guyishton Lake
Day Lake	Ootsanee Lake
Isaac Lake	Lund Lake
Helene Lake	* Backcountry lake east of Knapp Lake
Hannay Lake	* Backcountry Lake North east of Knapp Lake
* Henrietta Lake cluster	* Gail Lake / GALE