

April 24, 2001

Major Licensees
Small Business Forest Enterprise Program (SBFEP)
Small Scale Salvage Program (SSS)
Community Forest
Lakes Forest District

Re: Landscape Unit Planning – Draft Old Growth Management Areas and Objectives

The purpose of this letter is to inform you about the status of the landscape unit planning initiative and to provide direction for the management of the draft OGMA's within the Lakes Forest District.

Under Part 2, Section 4 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* the district manager, by written order, may establish an area of land within the forest district as a landscape unit, and may vary the boundaries of the unit or cancel the unit, in accordance with the regulations, and any direction of the chief forester. In addition, the district manager must establish objectives for a landscape unit, and may vary or cancel an objective.



On March 17, 1999, the chief forester sent a memorandum to the district managers, which provided direction for the Landscape Unit Planning. The following are the highlights of the memorandum:

- ◆ Landscape Unit Planning Guide, which consolidates prior direction and information and presents new techniques and procedures to implement landscape unit planning was approved for distribution.
- ◆ To ensure consistent and informed application of the guide, finalization and approval of landscape unit objectives should not occur until training has been received and Regional Landscape Unit Planning Strategy have been reviewed and revised if necessary.
- ◆ The retention of old growth and wildlife trees was recognised as essential in providing a strong foundation for landscape-level biodiversity management, and is the priority for landscape unit planning. According to the chief forester's direction, objectives for the priority elements of biodiversity for all landscape units must be delivered by July 31, 2002. However, with the delay in getting training done as originally anticipated (commencing in May 1999), the FPC Steering Committee has said that it will review the set deadline.
- ◆ The impact of landscape unit biodiversity objectives on provincial timber supply is not permitted to exceed 4.1 % in the short-term and 4.3 % over the long-term.

The Regional Landscape Unit Planning Strategy (RLUPS) is approved and the persons within the Lakes Forest District carrying out the planning attended the training session. Landscape

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unit planning for the priority elements of biodiversity (OGMAs and WTR) is underway and we intend to meet the provincial deadline. So far we have delineated the final draft OGMAs for the Bulkley LU (field verification completed), and the draft OGMAs for the Cheslatta LU (no field verification has been completed). Work is underway for the Ootsa landscape unit.

As you are aware, we have been battling the beetle outbreak within our district for the last few years. This makes the establishment of the OGMAs very difficult. The timeline between the initial identification of the suitable areas and legal establishment of the OGMAs and objectives can be very long. Consequentially, by the time the draft OGMAs are legally established they may be altered by the management practices to the point of losing desired structure and may have to be replaced or modified.

The initial selection is done with the intent to reduce the impacts to the timber supply while making sure that the requirements of the RLUPS, Higher Level Plan, chief forester's direction and LRMP intent with respect to the OGMAs are met. However, any significant change to the initial selection could cause excessive impacts to the timber supply and could delay the timely completion of the landscape unit planning for the priority elements of biodiversity.

Due to the circumstances stated above, I have decided to consider the draft OGMAs, during the approval of the operational plans or amendments, for the purpose of determining if the plan or amendment will adequately manage and conserve the forest resources of the area to which it applies. I will also consider the draft OGMAs when I approve silviculture prescriptions or grant silviculture exemptions for salvage within their boundaries. I recognise that this may present an obstacle to effective planning of your operational activities, therefore I have asked my staff to undertake the following measures:

- ◆ Maps of the draft OGMAs will be posted on the MOF FTP site as soon as the planning section produces them.
- ◆ Minimise the time between location of potential OGMAs and posting on the FTP site as much as possible.
- ◆ Incorporate " potential OGMA" locations into FDP expectations meetings to cover the changes.

In addition, included with this letter are draft objectives and strategies for the Bulkley landscape unit and draft decision matrix for harvesting in OGMAs. Please feel free to submit your comments and questions regarding these two documents.

Implementation monitoring of the landscape unit plans is a crucial step in determining the effectiveness of such plans. For the purposes of monitoring the implementation of the OGMAs and objectives and to support the implementation of the draft decision matrix for harvesting within the OGMAs, we have developed the following procedure (internal) to track the status of the OGMAs:

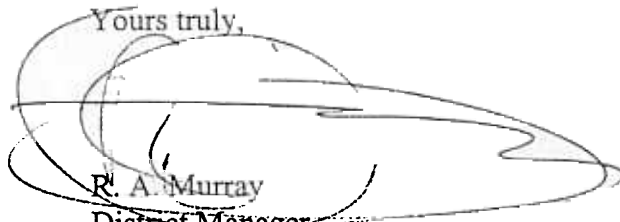
1. The district planner will make the maps of the OGMAs (draft or final) available to the major licensees, SBFEP, Community Forest, and SSSP.
2. I will consult with the field ecosystem specialist and my staff to gather information to help me determine if planned harvesting is consistent with the objectives of the OGMAs. Where the decision is made that no activities should take place, the OGMA will be left to the natural processes to continue. If management is to occur, acceptable management practices will be determined with the intent to maintain the structure of the OGMA.

3. Upon completion of the management activities, the district planner will create a summary report of the status of the OGMA and the information will be entered into landscape unit planning database for the monitoring purposes.
4. The field ecosystem specialist and the district planner will review the OGMA status and make recommendations to myself about what future actions may be taken.

Even though it is the Ministry of Forests responsibility to monitor implementation of landscape unit plans, your active participation is welcome and requested. Having that in mind, I would like to take this opportunity to invite your thoughts on the above procedure.

Please forward your comments and questions regarding this letter or any other landscape unit planning related matter in writing to the District Planner, (Merima Domazet@gems1.goc.bc.ca).

Yours truly,



R. A. Murray
District Manager
Lakes Forest District

Enclosure(s): Draft Decision Matrix for Harvesting in OGMA
Draft Objectives and Strategies for the Bulkley Landscape Unit

pc: Brent Turmel (Senior Forester-Major Tenures, Woodlot Licenses & Community Forest)
John Stadt (Forest Ecosystem Specialist)

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity conservation is a key component of the Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act (the Code). The Code recognizes several biodiversity elements needed to maintain ecosystem functioning and they are: retention of old growth forest, seral stage distribution, landscape connectivity, stand structure, species composition and temporal and spatial distribution of cutblocks (patch size). The priority of this landscape unit plan is the development of objectives for old growth retention and stand structure. In addition the objectives for the seral stage distribution will be developed.

The Bulkley Landscape Unit received a Biodiversity Emphasis Option (BEO) of “Intermediate “ through the biodiversity value ranking and the BEO assignment process during the development of the Lakes Land and Resource Management Plan.

Seral Stage Distribution

The goal of the following seral stage distribution objectives is to maintain the diversity of seral stages and disturbance regimes found within various biogeoclimatic subzones and variants within the Bulkley landscape unit.

Objective #1

Maintain representation of ecosystems in old seral condition (old growth) as per the following table:

Table 1. Old Seral Stage Targets

BEC Subzone	Age	% Forested Area
SBSdk, SBSmc2	>140	>11
ESSFmc	>250	> 9

Strategies

1. *Established OGMAs will contribute to the old seral target.*
2. *Wildlife tree patches (WTPs) comprised of old growth forest and over 2 ha will contribute to the old seral target.*
3. *Incorporate rare old growth ecosystems identified by the BC conservation data center such as: SBSdk 02/04/08, ESSFmc 02/03, when identified through operational plans, in the WTPs or amend landscape unit objectives when appropriate to establish new OGMAs or modify the existing.*

4. *Show through analysis, including maps, that the required amount of old forest exists on the Crown forested land base¹.*

Objective #2

Maintain the natural age class distribution across the landscape unit. Apply mature plus old and early seral retention targets as follows:

Table 2. Mature Plus Old Seral Stage Targets

BEC Subzone	Age	% Forested Area
SBSdk, SBSmc2	>100	> 23
ESSFmc	>120	> 28

Table 3. Early Seral Stage Targets

BEC Subzone	Age	% Forested Area
	<40	< 54
ESSFmc	<40	<36

Strategies

1. *Show through analysis, including maps, that the required amount of mature plus old forest exists on the Crown forested land base, and that the maximum amount of early seral stage targets are not exceeded.*

Retention of Old Growth Forest Through the Establishment of OGMA's

The goal of the following OGMA's objectives is to establish areas that contain, or are managed to recruit specific structural old growth attributes and that are representative of the range of ecosystems types found across the Bulkley landscape unit.

Objective #3

Manage for old growth attributes within the areas indicated on the map attached, hereby established, as OGMA's.

¹Information is to be provided by the licensees for district analysis.

Strategies

1. *Harvesting will not be permitted in OGMAs unless allowed for under the strategies 2, 3, and 4.*
2. *Within the OGMAs, the following activities will be permitted:*
 - *cone gathering and tree topping,*
 - *fire suppression,*
 - *range use,*
 - *hunting, fishing, trapping,*
 - *recreation,*
 - *mining and exploration including incidental tree cutting for mining and exploration purposes, and*
 - *collection of botanical forest products.*
3. *Allow natural processes to occur within OGMAs unless infestations or infections threaten to put OGMAs values at risk or threaten to spread into areas outside OGMAs. Aim at retaining structural features of old growth where intervention is required (refer to the Figure 1).*
4. *Roads will not be permitted in OGMAs unless no other reasonable and cost effective options exist. When roads have been constructed within OGMAs, road deactivation will occur once operational activities are completed.*
5. *Within the OGMAs new grasing tenures will not be issued or boundary of existing tenures changed.*

Objective #4

Replace or modify OGMA where ability to manage OGMA objectives have been significantly² compromised due to the:

- exploration and mining activities,
- natural proceses, or
- harvesting as per the strategies 2, 3, and 4 of the objective #3.

² Significance will be determined on the case by case basis.

Stand Structure through Wildlife Tree Retention

The goal of the following Wildlife Tree Retention (WTR) objectives is to maintain the structural attributes³ of natural forests within managed forests over the rotation of a managed stand. These objectives will be achieved by retaining wildlife tree patches⁴ (WTPs) at the time of harvest and during silviculture activities.

Objective #5

WTR objectives are established for each subzone within the landscape unit, and applied to each cutblock within the subzone. Retention targets specified in table 4 can vary between the cutblocks in a Harvest Unit⁵ where sound biological reasons deem it important. The final targets, however, must be met for each Harvest Unit within a LU/BEC subzone combination.

Strategies

1. *Provide connectivity within a logged area by including “internal wildlife tree patches”.*
2. *Provide structure in riparian management areas, but limit wildlife tree patches in riparian management areas to less than 50% of the total wildlife tree patch area of a harvest unit*
3. *Attempt to visibly and physically “break up” the area to be logged.*
4. *Distribute patches throughout the block with distances between patches (or to other suitable leave areas outside the block) not normally exceeding 500 metres.*

Objective #6

The size of the wildlife tree patches is based on the gross area of each cutblock and shall not be less than the values stated in the following table:

³ Structural Attributes: components of a forest stand (including living and dead standing trees, canopy architecture, and fallen dead trees) which together determine stand structure.

⁴ Wildlife Tree Patch: an area specifically identified for the retention and recruitment of suitable wildlife trees. It can contain a single wildlife tree or a group reserve.

⁵ Harvest Unit:

- a) For forest licenses and community forest agreements the harvest unit is defined as a cutting permit.
- b) For woodlot licenses the harvest unit is defined as the woodlot license area or as a cutting permit.
- c) For the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program the harvest unit is defined as an individual block or a group of blocks which are within 4 kilometer radius of each other and where the silviculture prescription for these blocks refer to the fact that they are a harvest unit.

Table 4. Wildlife Tree Patch Retention Targets

BEC Subzone	% of cutblock to be retained as WTP
SBS dk	7
SBS mc2	7
ESSFmc, ESSFmcp	5

Objective #7

Trees comprising wildlife tree patches shall have an average age that is consistent with the age of the stand harvested. Areas chosen for wildlife tree patches shall have a forested crown closure of not less than 25%.

Strategies

1. *Select wildlife tree patches that are representative of the stand harvested.*
2. *Retain both coniferous and deciduous trees.*
3. *Wildlife tree patches should be selected based on the characteristics of individual trees found within the wildlife tree patch as per the following table:*

Table 5. Wildlife Tree Characteristics

Wildlife Tree Value	Characteristics
<p>HIGH</p> <p>A high-value wildlife tree has at least two of the characteristics listed in the adjacent column.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal decay (heartrot or natural/ excavated cavities present) • Crevices present (loose bark or cracks suitable for bats) • Large brooms present • Active or recent wildlife use • Current insect infestation • Tree structure suitable for wildlife use (e.g., large nest, hunting perch, bear den, etc.) • Retain large, old trees including trees within the upper 10% of the diameter class • Locally important wildlife tree species
MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large, stable trees that will likely develop two or more of the above attributes for High
LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees not covered by High or Medium categories

4. *Incorporate into wildlife tree patches uncommon species, stand characteristics, and other elements of stand level biodiversity.*
5. *Locate wildlife tree patches to provide a range of old forest stand attributes such as standing dead trees, large standing live trees, coarse woody debris, tree species diversity, structural diversity and forest soils.*

Objective #8

The district manager may on a case specific basis, approve cutblocks that vary from objectives 5,6 and 7.

Strategy

- 1. Eliminate the requirement for wildlife tree patches on very small cutblocks.*
- 2. Eliminate or reduce the requirement for wildlife tree patches for cutblocks that are harvested by "partial cut" silviculture systems if the "leave trees" are to be left on site for one rotation.*

Objective #9

Allow natural processes to occur within wildlife tree patches unless infestations or infections in the wildlife tree patch threaten to spread to the adjacent forested areas. Where intervention is required, treatment will retain a diversity of structural attributes or a suitable replacement wildlife tree patch will be located.

Figure 1. Draft Decision Matrix for Harvesting in OGMA

