

Best Practices for Licensees regarding Information Sharing Packages and Permit Applications

Prince George Natural Resource District

The intention of this document is to provide clarity and guidance to licensees with respect to Information Sharing on block planning packages, to ensure these Information Sharing processes support efficiency and consistency in Prince George Natural Resource District (DPG) processes for consultation and permit authorizations.

This document should not be confused with the Prince George District Manager Letter of Expectations for CFA and Woodlot One CP Applications.

This is a living document which will be reviewed and updated as needed.

Terminology:

Information Sharing Package: A planned development package which includes *multiple* proposed Cutting Permits and Road Permits. Special Use Permits (SUPs) and accompanying Licences to Cut may also be included in Information Sharing Packages.

Referral: When a proponent supplies an Information Sharing package to a First Nation (Nation). This initiates conversations between a licensee and Nations whose territories overlap with planned development areas. The DPG First Nation (DPG FN) Inbox (fn.dpg@gov.bc.ca) must be notified when a referral is made; once the Prince George First Nations Advisors (the DPG FN team) is aware of the package, timelines can be established for consultation initiation.

Consultation: When the Province engages with Nations to understand their interests and any concerns with a planned development. This process informs DPG's decision-makers when making decisions on subsequent permit applications and may result in recommendations regarding approaches to mitigate potential impacts to Nations' interests. For planned developments in an Information Sharing package, the consultation period is a minimum of 60 days; conversations between proponents and Nations are expected to continue during this period.

Engagement: Any type of communication between a licensee and a Nation (emails, meetings, or phone calls) which facilitates the process of understanding and addressing concerns raised by the Nation in relation to planned operations in their territory.

Staledate: The date at which consultation on proposals shared as part of an Information Sharing package must be redone. Current practice is two years from the date that a consultation package is sent to a provincial Decision Maker for review. There may be some circumstances where a shorter timeframe is appropriate (for example a change in Nation leadership or staff).

1) TIMELINES:

- a) When a licensee makes a referral, the licensee must notify the DPG FN team concurrently, via the [DPG FN Inbox](#), and provide the same information package that was referred to Nations.
- b) The DPG FN team will attempt to initiate consultation within four weeks following the date a licensee makes a referral.
- c) The DPG FN team will notify the licensee when they have initiated consultation.
 - i. If licensees have not received a notification within four weeks of a referral, they may follow up by contacting the DPG FN Inbox.
- d) Consultation on a planned development will occur simultaneously with all potentially impacted Nations and will not be initiated until a licensee has referred an Information Sharing package to all overlapping Nations. If a licensee has omitted making a referral to an overlapping Nation, consultation timelines will be established once the omitted Nation receives the referral.
- e) Consultation will be initiated with a proposed timeline of 60 days with all Nations.
- f) If the details provided in an Information Sharing package are not sufficient to facilitate an understanding of the planned development, anticipate that timelines for consultation could be longer.
- g) Expect at least six months between the initiation of consultation and decision making on permit applications.
- h) Licensees should not apply for Cutting or Road Permits until the DPG FN team has confirmed that consultation on the Information Sharing package those permits were shared within has been reviewed by the provincial decision maker. If unsure about the status of the consultation process, licensees should contact the DPG FN Inbox prior to submitting Cutting or Road Permit applications.
- i) The consultation process does not 'end'. Nations can provide comments throughout the entire authorizations process. It is therefore important that licensees continue to engage directly with Nations throughout the consultation and authorizations processes.

2) DATA FORMATTING/REPRESENTATION:

- a) Provide shapefiles, KMZ's and PDF maps that are clearly labelled and easy to read (see section 3 for naming conventions).
- b) Submissions must include a shape for each the following:
 - i. All proposed road permits
 - ii. All proposed blocks
 - iii. All proposed SUPs
 - iv. All associated buffer areas
- c) Spatial data provided to DPG must be consistent with data shared with Nations.

- d) Provide a completed Spatial Analysis spreadsheet (template included with this guidance) to DPG when notifying that an Information Sharing package has been referred to Nations. This information will support the DPG FN team in preparing and initiating consultation.

3) NAMING CONVENTIONS:

- a) Use consistent naming conventions which clearly identify the month and year the package was referred to Nations / submitted to DPG.
- b) The naming convention of an Information Sharing package should be reflected in all associated files (spatial data, maps, communications, and subsequent permit applications).

4) CONSULTATIVE AREAS:

- a) Ensure that the referral information shared with Nations accurately reflects overlaps between planned development areas and the consultative areas identified in the Consultative Areas Database (<https://maps.gov.bc.ca/ess/hm/cadb/>).
- b) If unsure whether to include information within a referral to a Nation, or unsure about the process for identifying a consultative area, licensees should contact a member of the DPG FN team for assistance prior to referring an Information Sharing package.

5) ENGAGEMENT WITH NATIONS:

- a) Provide summaries of all engagement with Nations to the DPG FN team on an ongoing basis, in a timely manner, to support DPG's consultation and authorizations processes.
 - i. Engagement summaries should include specific details regarding how licensees have responded to or addressed concerns raised by Nations, including whether any accommodations have been reached with a Nation or how planned developments have been modified or mitigated to avoid impacts to the Nation's interests.
 - ii. At the permit application stage, licensees are expected to include relevant details from the engagement summary within the permit application package, particularly how concerns raised by Nations, specific to that permit, have been addressed.
- b) Information Sharing packages should clearly identify priority permits (those which the licensee wishes to submit applications for in the near future), so that the Nations may prioritize their review.
- c) Expect consultation timelines to be lengthened when a Nation has identified an interest in conducting a field assessment of a planned development area. Licensees

are expected to coordinate site visits or field assessments as part of their engagement after a referral.

6) ARCHAEOLOGICAL / CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENTS:

- a) Nations often request Archaeological Assessments, such as Archaeological Overview Assessments (AOAs) or Archaeological Impact Assessments (AIAs), in consultation; an AOA is the first step in evaluating the need for further work to identify and/or protect archaeological resources. It is good practice to share Archaeological Assessments with all Nations whose territories overlap with a planned development area, not just the Nation that has requested it.
 - i. Assessments for archaeological potential should be precisely communicated on all permit applications. This includes assessments for previously constructed or disturbed features.
- b) Information on archaeological studies can be found here:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/natural-resource-use/archaeology/assessments-studies>
- c) Assessments for Cultural Heritage Resources (CHR), as defined under the Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA), are not captured by AOAs/AIAs. If a Nation indicates concerns about the identification or protection of CHR under FRPA, they may seek to arrange field assessments during snow-free periods before the commencement of harvesting activities. Licensees should consider the timelines associated with completing field assessments when developing operational plans.

7) ROADS:

- a) Ensure that all proposed roads, road re-activations and Forest Service Road significant works (as defined under FRPA) are specified within the Information Sharing package referred to Nations / submitted to DPG. This will ensure that these road developments are included in consultation on the planned development package.
- b) Planned road developments not clearly captured in an Information Sharing package will not be consulted on as part of the consultation for that package and will require consultation once a permit application is submitted to DPG.
- c) If road access is unknown at the time of Information Sharing, consider sharing all proposed routes and rationales to Nations in the referral. Include these communications as part of your engagement summary (see section 5).

8) PERMIT APPLICATIONS:

- a) Ensure that information supplied in the permit application is complete and correct.
- b) Correctly identify all Information Sharing packages the permit was included in.
- c) If the name of the block, road or SUP has changed from what was used in the Information Sharing package, clearly indicate the name originally used.

- d) Confirm that the final block and road shapes fall entirely within the buffer areas identified in the Information Sharing package. If a permit application area does not fall within an area previously consulted on, the permit will require consultation at the time of the application.
- e) Where permit-specific concerns have been identified by a Nation, including an up-to-date engagement summary outlining how these concerns have been addressed is recommended at the time of permit application.
- f) Ensure that archaeological potential ratings are specifically identified for all block and road areas, including existing roads where there is the potential for modification as defined under FRPA. The archaeological potential for one permit area should not be used to describe the potential of another permit area.
- g) Permit applications should not be submitted prior to the completion of any required AIA's or CHR field assessments.

9) SPECIAL USE PERMITS:

- a) Special Use Permits (SUPs) can be included in Information Sharing Packages. Provide all relevant details, including all intended use(s), whether the site is new or a renewal and the area of the site.
 - i. At the permit application phase, ensure that the application refers to the Information Sharing Package it was included in.
- b) Individual SUP applications need to be submitted to the [DPG Office Inbox](mailto:princegeorgedistrictoffice@gov.bc.ca) (princegeorgedistrictoffice@gov.bc.ca) only; do not send to the DPG FN Inbox as consultation will not be initiated prior to review by Authorizations.
- c) Archaeological assessments are required for all permits including previously disturbed areas such as existing gravel pits.