

OMINECA REGION GUIDANCE

Stand and Landscape-Level Retention
for Harvesting in Response to Spruce
Beetle Outbreaks (Sept. 09, 2017)

Outline

1. Engagement Process & Results
2. Final Document Review: Coles notes, what was in there again?
3. Discussion: concerns & next steps

Engagement Process

- A rough draft was created and then went through multiple revisions by Omineca ministry staff
- A locally accepted version was circulated to licensees, First Nations, Academia and across various Gov't departments
- A revised draft was completed based on the feedback and *all un-edited comments* along with an engagement summary was forwarded to the office of the chief forester
- Chief foresters' staff revised the guidance to it's current version and the chief forester approved and signed off on the document Sept 21, 2017

Licensee Comments/Concerns

- General concerns about targets and implementation of the guidance
- Guidance considered early seral to be 0-40yrs.
 - Biodiversity order defines early seral as 0-20yrs.
- Contradictions between recommendations and appendices
- Wanted clarity on stand vs. landscape retention
- Concerns with partial harvesting
- Timber supply impacts questioned? Requested more time to review

First Nations Comments/Concerns

- ▣ General support for the concept of the document
- ▣ Wanted increased retention targets
- ▣ Retention targets need to be tracked and reported
- ▣ Concerned that if recommendations are not legal requirements they won't be followed

Government & Academia

- ▣ Retention targets are too low.
 - Hydrological impacts
 - Wildlife concerns: Caribou, Moose, Fisher, Grizzly etc.
- ▣ Retention should be spatialized
- ▣ Concerned that if recommendations are not legal requirements they won't be followed

What was in the final document?

▣ 20 Recommendations

- Landscape-Level Retention (Recommendations #1-12):
 - ▣ Collaborate on harvest planning
 - ▣ Develop coordinated spatialized retention plan (retain for 40yrs.) that ID's areas between cutblocks
 - ▣ Forest licensees, First Nations and FLNRORD work collaboratively to establish new mechanisms for tracking, communicating and monitoring harvesting, partial harvesting & retention in response to outbreak

What was in the final document?

- ▣ Stand-Level Retention (recommendations #13-20)
 - Retention of mature/old forest structure should increase as size of the harvest patches increase

Patch Size	Percent of Patch Un-harvested/Retained
<50 ha	10%
50-100 ha	>10
101-1,000 ha	>15%
>1,000 ha	>25%

- Process for delineating patch size was defined in appendix

What was in the Final Document?

- ▣ (#18) Partial harvesting silviculture systems should be utilized to optimize harvest of trees attacked by beetle while retaining healthy trees. Partial harvesting also mimics the naturally occurring gap disturbance pattern created by spruce beetle
- ▣ (#19) The distance between cover for large and small animals should be managed in harvested openings. This should include management of block edge, in-block retention and coarse woody debris (CWD) management for amount, distribution and piece size. Within harvest blocks, the distance to standing tree cover should not exceed 250 meters, and should be less on avg. (Prince George Land and Resource Management Plan, 1999 and Omineca Regional Wildlife Tree Patch Retention Guidance, 2005). Managing the distance between standing trees will also support seed and pollen dispersal and will contribute to maintaining a natural range of genetic variability (Leadem, C.L. et.al 1997)

Implementation Discussion

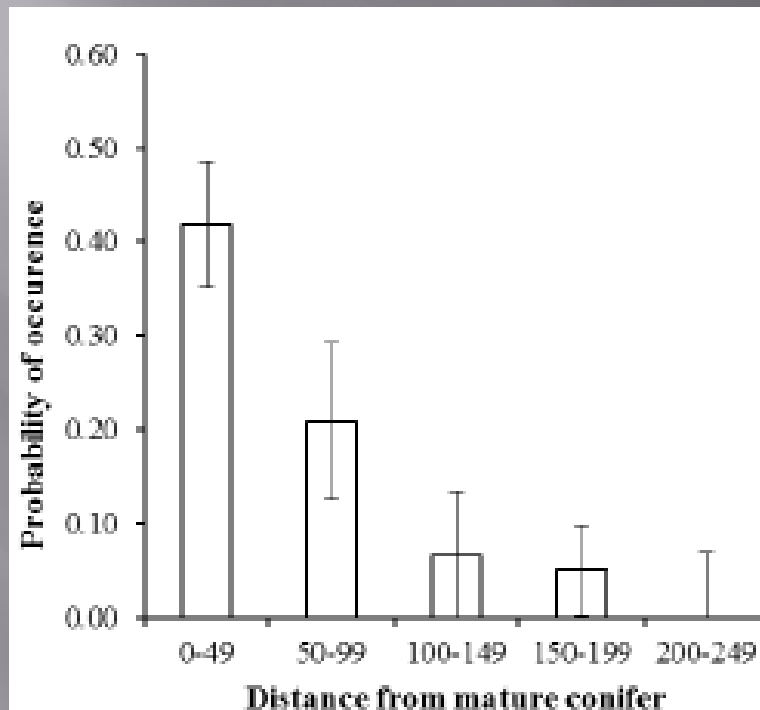
Professional reliance is] *“the practice of accepting and relying upon the decisions and advice of professionals who accept responsibility and can be held accountable for the decisions they make and the advice they give”*¹.

¹ Professional Reliance in Forest and Range Management in BC: From Concept to Practice – July 2006 – ABCFP Guideline

- ▣ Stolen directly from Trevor Joyce’s presentation without consent
- ▣ Moving forward Implementation & monitoring?
 - key goal of this guidance is to minimize unintended large amalgamated harvest openings that can result from a lack of coordinated retention planning, and the associated risks to timber and non-timber values.

Moose Overwintering: Pellet Study

Provided by Jeff Werner, PhD, R.P Bio. Wildlife Ecologist Omineca region.



Probability of occurrence of moose pellets within clearcuts in relation to distance from edge of mature forest greater than 100m in width (i.e. excluding small retention patches). Data are from 143 50m² circular plots randomly assigned to a ~100 km² portion of harvested landscape approximately 30 km south of Prince George. Minimum distance between plots = 150m. Plantations are pine, between 10 and 13 years of age within SBSdw3. Pellet data were collected during May 2017, prior to full leaf out, and are interpreted to represent an index of moose habitat use during late winter and early spring. Bars are SE of a proportion = $\sqrt{p(1-p)/n}$ where, p is proportion of plots containing a pellet group (>10 pellets), n is Number of observations in the sample category.

Omineca Regional WTP guidelines (2005)

- ▣ The scientific literature has identified maximum dispersal distances into opening, such as cutblocks, for a variety of wildlife, including moose (<60-200m) (MNR 1990), deer (<100m) (Bunnell 1990, Timmerman 1991), elk (<200m) (Brunt 1990, Timmerman 1991), marten (<23-150m) (Lofroth and Steventon 1990, Buskirk and Ruggiero 1994), fisher (avoid open areas), chickadees (25-100m) (St. Clair et al 2000).