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

Climate-Informed Investments for Forest Enhancement and Carbon

Information Note #7 Best Practices for Reforestation of Decommissioned Roads, Landings and Other NSR Areas

October 31, 2017

Introduction

Forest carbon sequestration can be enhanced by growing more trees on areas that would not otherwise be occupied by forest cover, or on understocked productive sites. Some potential areas for establishing stands include areas burned by fire, devastated by forest health agents, or removed from the forest land base by roads, landings, and seismic lines.

Purpose

This Best Practices information sheet is designed to assist FES proponents in ensuring that their forest carbon projects result in favorable outcomes for carbon sequestration and timber production, while considering broader land use objectives and tenure obligations.

Objectives

Proposals reflect beneficial practices when they help meet the following objectives:

1. Concentrate FES reforestation investments in areas that are unencumbered by reforestation obligations and would not otherwise be reforested (e.g. areas burned);
2. Ensure that these investments will have a long term benefit for carbon and/or timber; and,
3. Avoid unintended consequences for other government objectives (e.g. avoid converting alpine areas, grasslands, wetlands, old growth areas that are important for biodiversity, etc.).

Strategic, Operational and Tactical Approaches

Proposals reflect beneficial practices when the following practices are planned:

Strategic Approaches

- Prioritize areas that have no existing reforestation obligation;
- In project planning, ensure you have stakeholder, First Nations, and licensee input into prioritization and selection of areas/roads. This includes, for example, trap-line owners, guide outfitter and recreationalists who use backcountry roads;
- Consider the implications for other stakeholders and values: for example deactivated roads are not accessible for fire-fighting crews or tree planters who may need to access more distant areas in the future, but reforested roads may reduce ungulate predation over time;
- Ensure road rehabilitation is planned for the long-term and the investment won't be impacted by other known activities. Refer to 'permanent deactivation' in the Forest Road Engineering Guidebook for more information; and,

- Refer to the *FFT Access Management Planning/ Road Reactivation/Deactivation* activity standards and other related documents, and consider whether other tenures exist (e.g. for a log sort, range user, trapper, guide/outfitter, or recreational, mining exploration/ development, independent power producers, etc.) and avoid areas with existing tenure conflicts.

Operational and Tactical Approaches

Roads and Landings

- Consider whether the road or landing road may need to be re-contoured and whether it has been properly put to bed (proper surface draining); and,
- Consider the permeability of the surface and what site preparation treatments may be needed in advance of planting. Assess the impact of any site preparation necessary (mounding, bedding, scarification).

Other NSR Areas (refer to other BMP on rehabilitation)

- Use the Land and Resource Data Warehouse (LRDW) to determine the status of the block;
- Check to see whether there is an existing reforestation obligation, and if so, avoid proposing these areas. In the event that an obligation exists but you have reason to believe the area may be available, seek approval from the FLNRORD district office prior to applying for funding to reforest this area;
- Survey the area to determine what treatments may be needed, including potential brushing before planting, or for several years following planting; and,
- Avoid removal of healthy coniferous over-story. Where dictated by other existing objectives for the area, it may be advisable to leave healthy deciduous, shrub or even herbaceous cover also.

Cumulative Effects and Potential Impacts on Other Values

Consider other values including:

- Wildlife: manage access, especially related to reduction of impacts to wildlife (caribou, moose, deer, etc.) from excessive motorized activity and hunting pressure;
- Ensure that planned target stocking objectives do not conflict with higher level planning objectives (e.g. in GAR) that specify lower stocking to achieve wildlife management strategies;
- Water: Reduce hydrological impacts during rehabilitation by improving vegetated surface coverage and water movement across the road;
- Fish: Assess and reduce fish passage concerns during prescription and implementation phases; and,
- Soil: Assess and reduce erosional and mass wasting concerns during prescription, implementation, and monitoring phases.

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