Coast Region FRPA Implementation Team
Resource Planning Working Group
Cedar Management Strategy – Summary of Work Plan Phase 1
Coastal Timber Harvesting Monitoring Protocol

Following a review of the March, 2011 *Summary of Cedar Management Considerations for Coastal British Columbia Discussion Draft* document (the "draft document") the Coast Operational Issues Forum (OIF) mandated the Coast Region FRPA Implementation Team (CRIT) the task of assessing and indentifying options specific to three of the recommendations in the document (recommendations 1, 2, 4). CRIT subsequently assigned the task to the Resource Planning Working Group (RPWG), a sub group of CRIT.

The three recommendations from draft document are:

1) The FLNR and licensees should jointly develop cedar management strategies for coastal TSA's which should identify objectives for cedar resources and a plan to achieve the objectives.

2) Branch, Region and licensees should jointly develop and apply a protocol to monitor and assess harvest profiles for TSA's and TFL's. The protocol should ensure that the most appropriate information is used in a consistent manner.

4) FLNR should conduct research to improve understanding with respect to: prescribed fire as a silviculture tool, fertilization of cedar, browse resistant cedar, extent and impact of yellow cedar decline.

The RPWG assessed the task and provided the advice that it would be appropriate to address the recommendations in two phases. The first phase would deal with recommendation # 2 (development of a protocol). The remaining two recommendations would be revisited under phase 2 once the once the protocol was developed and applied to various management units or other administrative units. The RPWG developed a work plan which was endorsed by the OIF in November 2011.

The work plan included the following main tasks:

a) Determine the Management Units (MU's) of relevance to the issue identified in the March 2011 document.
b) Determine the extent of the issue within the MU's.
c) Develop a protocol to analyze and monitor species harvest in relation to inventory, projected timber supply and AAC's.
d) Develop summaries of analysis and recommendations for vetting through CRIT and endorsement by OIF before proceeding to phase 2.

Determine the MU's of Relevance

The RPWG recognized the Mid-coast, Kingcome and North coast TSA's as MU's that had a high amount of Cw/Cy as a % the total Timber Harvesting Land Base (THLB) inventory. The Mid-coast was selected as the MU for the initial analysis on the basis of having updated TSR data, being subject to a consistent Land Use Plan regime (EBM) over the entire TSA and being administered through the Coast Region.

Determine the extent of the issue within the MU's.

In addressing this issue the group believed it appropriate to look at long term trends in harvest profile in relation to timber supply, inventories and AAC's. As well, it was determined to be relevant to assess the harvest by different methods of measure: scale, cut by inventory, cruise volume depletion.

The grouping of cedar/cypress was applied in the March 2011 document. The RPWG believed it to be appropriate to maintain consistency with earlier document.

Development of Protocol to Analyse and Monitor Timber Harvest

The objective of the protocol is to provide a clearly defined set of procedures for monitoring, compiling and reporting information about the profile of timber harvest, and for comparing the timber harvest profile to the harvest assumptions used in timber supply review (TSR) base case modeling for designated MU's.

Initial work on the protocol was developed through a case study of harvest in the Mid-coast TSA. Harvest history was reviewed back to 1985 with a detailed examination and analysis for the 1999 to 2010 period. Information was obtained from 4 principle sources: timber scale data from the HBS, forest inventory data for the TSA, cruise data from the ECAS, cut-block boundaries and information provided in current and previous TSR's. The data was assembled in a manner that allowed examination and comparison of harvest rates by species. The cedar/cypress harvest profile for three measures of harvest profile (HBS volume, cut-block inventory volume and cruised volume) were presented in contrast to the cedar/cypress volume outputs from both TSR 2 and TSR3 base cases.

As work on the analysis progressed there was an interest in examining whether the same trends would occur in other MU's as was being found in the Mid-coast TSA. The draft analysis protocol was applied to the Kingcome TSA. At the same time ,for contract efficiency reasons, region staff applied the analysis protocol to the Strathcona, QCI (Haidi Gwaii) and North Coast TSA's.

The protocol document and accompanying appendices provide the framework, methods and procedures, including the final Mid-coast TSA case study as an example of application of the protocol.

Summaries of Analysis, Observations and Recommendations

1. The protocol provides an effective and consistent process to monitor the profile of timber harvest within a MU and may be applied to assessment of any species or geographic/administrative unit.
2. Both the HBS scale and by cut-block inventory provide meaningful measures of harvest profile. Decisions or conclusions with respect to species harvest levels should be in consideration of both measures
3. The comparison of actual harvest profiles over many years to the assumptions used in the TSR base case modeling provides a reasonable and appropriate assessment of resource sustainability.
4. The amount or level of un-harvested AAC should be recognized when reviewing trends in harvest profile for a MU.
5. As a general trend cedar/cypress HBS volumes exceed cut-block inventory volume while hemlock/balsam HBS volumes are less than cut-block inventory volumes. Additional investigation on this issue is warranted to determine the reason or reasons for this trend.
6. The Mid-coast case study indicates a significant portion of the harvest has occurred from outside of the THLB (both for TSR2 and TSR3). Further investigation may be warranted to determine if the THLB is appropriately defined.
7. The protocol provides for analysis by age class. This may be an appropriate analysis for addressing recommendation #1 from the March 2011 document.
8. Direction is required from the OIF on what further work should be addressed on the cedar management strategy issue. Specifically what persons or groups should be charged with addressing phase 2 (recommendations 1 and 4 from the March 2011 document).