BCTS
BC Timber Sales

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Retention, Wildlife Debris Piles (WDPs) & Roads (relative to cutblock development/Site Plans)

February 2023

Nothing in this document relieves a Qualified Registered Professional responsible for a Site Plan from the obligation to prescribe appropriate practices for the safe harvesting and reforestation of a cutblock and management of non-timber forest resources and values.

	General	**Moose management[1]**	**Fisher habitat[2]**	**Other**
Retention	Stand level retention (WTRAs and reserves) should target 25-30% of gross cutblock area unless site specific target/direction is available. As areas adjacent to riparian features often contain high levels of ecological and stand structural diversity, Riparian Management Area retention contributes significantly to WTRAs. Consider options for partial cutting – eg. dispersed retention of diameter classes of one or more species noted in cruise. Many species (eg. Northern Goshawk) require timing restrictions applied to the harvest area within a specified range from the protected habitat.	<u>All cutblocks</u> Where practical, low/wet areas (eg. NCBr), seepages and small wetlands should be incorporated into retention as these can serve as valuable 'anchor' points and provide screening and other habitat attributes. Protect mineral licks, wallows, wildlife trails, areas with significant browse species (eg. willow, dogwood), areas providing thermal cover and snow interception (eg. retention of mature Douglas fir, 'wolfy' spruce, etc.). <u>ESI Moose Specified Area cutblocks</u> Distribution of stand level retention, riparian management and overall harvest area layout must consider that from any point in the harvest area, the distance to cover (minimum 3 metres in height and more than 3 hectares in size) should not exceed 250 metres. Placement of retention should also be planned to limit lines of sight (LoS) within the harvest area. <u>Moose UWR Conditional Harvest Area cutblocks</u> Distance from any point within 60-hectare harvest area to either a Reserve or Security Cover must not exceed 125 metres. Retain deciduous stems, where present, outside of road area and roadside work area. Retain contiguous areas of Preferred Moose Browse or mature deciduous less than one hectare in size.	Retain groups/patches of Ac/At and trees with rust brooms in patches to preserve denning and resting habitat – connect (via tree retention or WDPs) with adjacent mature stands where practical. Retain areas with downed/elevated trees to preserve resting habitat and travel routes. Old (Age Class 8+) spruce leading stands in the SBS are often considered rare fisher habitat. Stands meeting those criteria and in proximity to riparian features are considered exceptionally rare fisher habitat.	Should also be used to manage visuals in Scenic Areas and to protect archaeological sites/areas of potential, recreational sites and trails and other resource user sites and corridors. Consideration should also be given to managing wildlife 'corridors' through the strategic placement of retention relative to adjacent forests and cutblocks.
WDPs	Utilize coarse harvest debris to increase small mammal habitat. Provide habitat structure and connectivity mitigating impacts from timber harvesting. Constructed from loosely criss-crossed piles of coarse debris to create a complex of snow free spaces and small mammal habitat/runways. Avoid prescribing piles on steep slopes (> 35%) as these would be difficult and potentially unsafe to construct.		Number: In SBS, Fisher Habitat Tool can be used to provide an initial base number of WDPs for a cutblock. Prescribing forester can then adjust for safety (steep slopes, wildfire interface area, etc.), site conditions, operational constraints, and harvest area configuration (shape/complexity and retention). In ESSF, first 50 hectares of harvest area, target 1 pile/5 hectares. Harvest areas greater than 50 hectares should plan an additional 1 pile/10 hectares. Location: Primarily intended to create movement corridors into/through harvest area but can also be used to extend adjacent habitat into harvest area (ie. piles parallel to boundary). Focus close to high habitat retention/stands and routes to high forage (hares, squirrels, grouse & rodents) habitat. Inter-pile distance should be around 30 to 40 metres, but must be 40 metres from standing timber, new forests, and mainline roads to manage fire hazard/abatement.	Construction; - 2 metres in height - 3 to 5 metres in width - 5 to 10 metres in length - preferable if some longer pieces radiate out from pile to provide covered travel routes - if possible, 'anchored' to standing residual trees Site specific considerations for other resource users must also be factored when known.

Roads	Temporary Access Structure (TAS) is a road within a cutblock not expected to provide access for future timber harvesting or other activities. Construction of TAS will contribute to the Max Allowable Soil Disturbance (MASD%) for the SU they are in, but the rehabilitation and reforestation of TAS will contribute to the cutblock NAR. Cutblock roads should be TAS subject to providing future access, but main cutblock road can be PAS to provide post-harvest access to within a kilometre of the back of a cutblock (ie. safety of silviculture workers). Sections of road not suitable or conducive to rehabilitation are likely not TAS.	An Effective Visual Screen should be established where a Mainline parallels a harvest boundary. The composition and width of a screen is best determined by site-specific assessment – an immature timber type or advanced regeneration can be as or more effective than retention of a mature timber type with little understory and subject to windthrow. Landform will also be a factor in harvest area visibility – harvest area terrain that is flat or drops from road corridor often provides less visibility. Where it is not practical to establish a screen directly adjacent to a Mainline, establishment of internal retention in foreground should be planned. Avoid decking/processing within sections of Mainline R/W unless only a minor amount of harvest area is visible. Road access into a cutblock should be designed to disrupt the visibility of linear roads (eg. avoid long straight road sections, utilize adjacent openings that provide screening, etc.). Roads should not be planned within 500 metres of high value wildlife habitat, wetlands (classified and non-classified) or lakes, but must be TAS if there is no practical alternative. <u>Moose UWR Conditional Harvest Area cutblocks</u> No new Permanent Access Structures (PAS) within 500 metres (h-distance) of a no harvest UWR.		General specs for cutblock road spacing/skidding distance; - 100 to 200* metres for adverse terrain - 300 to 500* metres for flat/favourable terrain. *use long skid distances, where possible, in moose management areas to reduce road density.
Reforestation	Some TAS will be rehabilitated leaving a 1.5-metre-wide ATV trail to facilitate post-harvest reforestation activities.	<u>ESI Moose Specified Area cutblocks</u> Promote mixed stands by prescribing a mix of all Preferred species for reforestation with emphasis on those providing superior snow interception and thermal cover providing they are ecologically suited to site. <u>Moose UWR Conditional Harvest Area cutblocks</u> Promote mixed stands by prescribing a mix of tree species in the approved stocking standard. No brushing within 20 metres of NAR outer boundary. Retain all Preferred Moose Browse not in direct competition with a crop tree.		

[1]To be applied in conjunction with a Moose Management Checklist where applicable. Also, reference MoU – ESI IM; Management Practices Moose & Riparian (Dec2019) and Ministerial Order for Moose UWR.

[2]Reference the Fisher Habitat Management Tables – Sub-Boreal Forests (Omineca)

<u>Definitions</u>

'Mainline' is any access road, not wholly contained in a cutblock, that is intended for longer term use. If in doubt, confirm with BCTS staff/Ministry Representative.

'Effective Visual Screen' is intended to reduce the visibility of ungulates in the post-harvest opening and should consider the timeframe from date of harvest until the new forest reaches a height of 3 metres. Where a Mainline R/W contains brush, immature and non-merchantable trees, harvest boundary ribboning should clearly exclude it from the harvest area to prevent accidental damage.

Moose UWR Conditional Harvest Area 'Reserves', 'Security Cover' and 'Preferred Moose Browse' – see definitions in GAR Order.