

Tumbler Ridge Community Forest - Forest Stewardship Plan

Dawson Creek Timber Supply Area

Support Document



March 2012

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Introduction

The material contained in this backgrounder provides additional information that supports the Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) but is not part of the plan. It has been produced to assist readers of the FSP in interpreting its application for resource management within the areas covered by the forest development units (FDU) of the FSP. Where it is considered important for understanding the FSP holder's management intent for a particular forest resource, additional information is provided that lends support to the results or strategies of the FSP. To this end, this document references the same structural headings as that found in the FSP.

The Forest Stewardship Plan

The Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) is a planning requirement under the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA). The FSP is primarily a landscape level plan - with links to site specific resource management practices – that contains legally enforceable results or strategies for managing a forest resource that are consistent with the FRPA legislated objectives set by government for managing the forest resource - results or strategies that must be measurable and/or verifiable by the government agency responsible for the resource.

Forest resource management under the FRPA is intended to be results based regime, applied primarily at a landscape level (i.e. over the area of a forest development unit (FDU)) and measured against the expected result or strategies stated in the FSP that must be consistent with the government objective for a forest resource. Results based management permits considerable flexibility and innovation regarding forest practices as long as the desired result or strategy is achieved. The FSP is a five year forest management plan that states, via measurable and/or verifiable results or strategies, the manner in which a FSP holder (i.e. Tumbler Ridge) will manage on a landscape level (i.e. FDU) a particular forest resource consistent with the government objective for the resource.

Background Information Supporting the FSP

6.2.1 Species at Risk

Northern Caribou and Bighorn Sheep are the two identified SAR that have government management objectives established by the Ministry of Environment Order: Ungulate Winter Range #U-9-002 effective October 16, 2006. Tumbler Ridge Community Forest (TRCF) will manage its operations consistent with the General Wildlife Measures contained in this Order.

While not a substitute for species specific habitat management, the following measures will assist in protecting and conserving key habitat values that benefit a wide range of species including SAR.

- Where appropriate, consulting with wildlife specialists within government agencies and within the private sector as a source of management expertise when preparing Forest Stewardship Plans (FSP), Pest Management Plans (PMP) and site level plans including amendments to those plans.
- Protecting and conserving important riparian habitat and mitigating impacts to streams, wetlands and lakes occurring within or adjacent to forest operations by applying appropriate riparian management practices.

- To the extent practicable, identifying and protecting site specific high value habitats in a manner consistent with the Ministry of Environments' accounts and measures described for each identified wildlife species.
- Protect important wildlife resource features (i.e. wildlife trees, dens, mineral licks, raptor nests, etc.) through inclusion within wildlife tree patches or excluding these resource features from the harvest areas.
- Implementing the objectives and strategies in the Dawson Creek Land and Resource Management Plan (DCLRMP) that apply to identified species at risk and/or implementing alternative strategies that are consistent with the intent of the DCLRMP for managing species at risk.
- Providing protection and buffering (screening) of identified site specific high value grizzly habitat (e.g. high use game trails, early/late spring foraging sites – avalanche chutes, wetlands, sedge meadows, etc.) through avoidance practices during block layout or through WTP placement.
- Reduce landscape fragmentation by concentrating harvest development that mimics natural disturbance patterns and minimizing new road construction by utilizing existing access (i.e. roads, seismic lines) wherever possible.
- Limiting vehicular travel into developed areas post harvest by ensuring appropriate levels of road deactivation (i.e. permanent, semi-permanent) are implemented.

6.4 Objectives Set by Government for Wildlife and Biodiversity – Stand Level

Planned wildlife tree patches (WTP), riparian reserves, non-productive/non-commercial areas and identified immature timber forest areas will provide structural attributes and biological diversity to the post harvest stand. Other important structural attributes such as wildlife trees that exhibit current or high potential habitat use as nesting sites, denning, etc. will be retained within WTP reserves.

6.5 Objectives Set by Government for Water, Fish, Wildlife and Biodiversity within Riparian Areas

Streams will be classed using the methodology and procedures described by Vince Poulin in the document entitled: Field Stream Classification (Poulin) for the Dawson Creek Forest District - field test and validation of an experimental Procedure for Risk Managing Streams, March 2005. Alternatively, the default criteria of the FPPR will be used. Vince Poulin's classification methodology has proven operationally very effective especially for correctly classifying small S3, S4 and S6 streams. Where deemed appropriate, fish inventories including stream shocking to define fish presence or absence will be used to augment the process of stream classification. All other riparian classifications (i.e. wetlands, lakes) will use the default criteria of the FPPR. Stream crossing assessments and construction will be carried out consistent with the best management practices described in Ministry of Environment documents entitled:

Terms and Conditions for changes in and about a stream specified by Ministry of Environment Habitat Officers, Peace Sub Region - Feb 2002.

Conservation Measures and Timing Windows for Peace Region Fish Stream Crossing - May 2002.

Tree Retention in the Riparian Management Zone

TRCF believes that the percentage of basal area retention within a riparian management zone (RMZ) should be based on specific site level information rather than a specified number. Riparian

characteristics and values (i.e. windthrow potential, forest health issues, wildlife habitat, stream bank stability, water quality, fisheries, etc.) inherent of any RMZ can be quite diverse. The results or strategies for RMZs in this FSP will allow the professional forester preparing the site plan to take into consideration the specific characteristics and values inherent of the RMZ and prescribe retention accordingly, as opposed to prescribing tree retention to comply with a pre-determined number in the FSP. Basal area retention within the riparian management zone will be specified in a written rationale prepared by a qualified registered professional as part of the site plan. The amount of basal area retained in a riparian management zone will be assessed taking into account the factors in FPPR Schedule 1 Section 2.

6.7 Objectives Set by Government for Cultural Heritage Resources

The results or strategies for this objective apply only to those cultural heritage resources that are not regulated by the *Heritage Conservation Act* (HCA). Cultural heritage resources (i.e. archaeological resources) that are regulated by the HCA fall outside the FSP and will be subject to a separate and distinct process for assessing potential and determining criteria for conducting an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA). Current sources for assessing archaeological potential (i.e. Archaeological Overview Assessment mapping) are landscape oriented at a very large scale and not considered a reliable tool in the Northeast BC for determining where to conduct AIAs. The cultural heritage evaluation methodology in the FSP -conducted by a qualified professional - may be used as an interim measure to identify a high likelihood of archaeological resources being present on a site and thus trigger the requirement for an AIA. The process for managing archaeological resources has not been clearly defined and is a work in progress.

Post-FSP Stakeholder Review and Comment Procedures

As an integral part of TRCF forest development planning post-FSP, stakeholders (i.e. tenured range, trapper and guide outfitter interests) will be encouraged to provide review and comment on proposed harvest development (i.e. cutblocks and roads). Procedures will involve individual stakeholder notification via letters outlining our intent to develop harvest opportunities within their tenures. Site specific information will be provided by TRCF (i.e. maps at appropriate scale showing proposed harvest development). Stakeholders will be requested to review our harvest plans within their tenures and provide relevant information that can be considered during the planning phase of operations. Other non-tenured interests, (i.e. Wolverine Nordic and Mountain Society and Peace Region Paleontology Research Centre) will be notified of our harvest development plans within a particular area based on their proximity to proposed development and in consideration of any past interest expressed by particular groups within an area.

Support Document Appendices

Appendix 1: Field Stream Classification (Poulin) for the Dawson Creek Forest District

Appendix 2:

Terms and Conditions for changes in and about a stream specified by Ministry of Environment Habitat Officers, Peace Sub Region - Feb 2002.

Conservation Measures and Timing Windows for Peace Region Fish Stream Crossing - May 2002