

Lesson 2: The Guidelines – An Introduction

30 minutes

Lesson Objectives

- ▲ To provide historical context of the issues
- ▲ To provide an overview of the contents of the guidelines
- ▲ To provide clear expectations for the participants of this session.

Method: Introduce the Guidelines – Lecturette

- ▲ Go over the chronology of events leading up to the guidelines
- ▲ Walk through the contents of the guidelines – suggest areas where we will go into more detail.

Background

The chief forester formed a Stand Density Management Working Group (the Working Group) in February 1996. The mandate of the Working Group was to provide a decision framework to address some contentious issues surrounding the effects of stand density.

- ▲ The Working Group consisted of five members from industry (Coast Forest and Lumber Association[2], Northern Forest Products Association, Interior Lumber Manufacturers Association, Cariboo Lumber Manufacturers Association) and five from Ministry of Forests.

Working Group deliberations considered the full range of stand density management practices, from initial espacement, through pre-commercial thinning (juvenile spacing) to commercial thinning.

The main emphasis, however, was pre-commercial thinning practice.

- ▲ Conclusions and recommendations are based upon a primary consideration of timber production, its implications on economics and forest-level planning.

Additional background

Density management is about achieving desired future forest conditions.

1984 – spacing was requested to be part of basic silviculture funding.

1987 – Bill 70 introduced spacing of stands over a “maximum” density for Pli and drybelt fir.

Treasury board required legislation be designed so that some costs of producing desired future forest conditions are paid by those who harvest. This was in anticipation that government funds would not always be available (i.e., potential countervail issues, plethora of disjunct funding sources – 18 over the last 10 years).

1988–1990 – numbers by district and region varied by philosophy and survey methodology.

1990–1991 – Industry Ministry Committee try to determine an appropriate “maximum” density for Pli – no agreement – Research and Silv branches set the number at 5000 sph.

Feb 1994 – New SP Regulation with “maximum” density for all coniferous tree species.

March 1994 – chief forester directive that 5000 csph is the ‘maximum’ density for all even aged stands. Purpose of the chief forester was to: stabilize SP approval.

Management unit specific numbers were part of the directive but were not acted upon.

NOTE: “Maximum” density is no way related to height repression density!

Philosophical Shift – The three main components

The Working Group advocates a philosophical change in the approach to stand-level decision-making. Selecting an option from a predetermined range of acceptable density regimes or treatments is not a responsible approach to making a management decision. Rather, technically sound, stand density management demands a structured process of thought and analysis which is based on knowledge from a number of disciplines.

The guidelines provide a decision framework which supports this new philosophy.

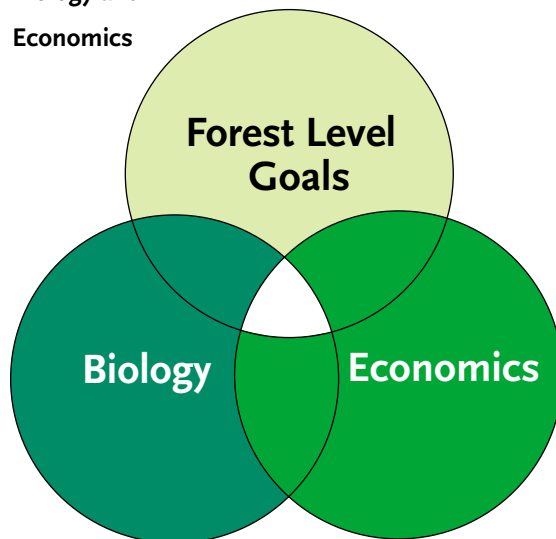
- ▲ It is designed to organize and guide the prescriptive thought process, rather than specify appropriate density regimes or default density standards.
- ▲ It also incorporates up-to-date stand density management concepts and information essential to the decision process.



Philosophical Shift

The three main components –
Density management from a simple number...
to a synthesis driven by...

- ▲ Objectives, governed by
- ▲ Biology and
- ▲ Economics



Although not addressed in the guidelines, the process of forest-level goal setting is an important prerequisite to stand-level decision making. Given clearly stated, higher level direction, practitioners will find the information (knowledge) and framework (structure) elements of this guidebook helpful in developing and justifying stand-specific prescriptions.

As the chief forester states in the preface to the guidelines:

The decision process requires a clear statement of objectives in TFL and TSA management plans. I therefore encourage both industry and government representatives to engage in extensive, joint dialogue in order to establish management unit objectives, and plan silviculture programs to achieve them.

Guideline Structure

The intent here is to show what information is found in the guidelines. We will briefly go over the chapter headings to provide a clear picture of what is provided in the guidelines.

Note: While this may appear tedious and, to some, 'a waste of time' as they too can read, this is an open session where points not clear to the reader/participant can be addressed. We will also use examples outside of the guidelines to highlight key points.

Introduction and background

Biological concepts of timber production

We will go into more detail on important biological concepts as they relate to density management. The key is that if it doesn't make sense biologically – don't do it!

Economic principles of timber production

We will discuss key elements of economic evaluations and stress the linkage to forest-level planning as well as stand-level analysis.

Forest planning considerations

The importance of forest-level objectives will be stressed.

Examples from current work in BC will be used to highlight opportunities.

A structured decision process

The decision framework will be presented along with a real world example.

Glossary

We will go over all glossary entries looking for the most arcane. Just kidding – but useful as it has biological, economic and planning definitions that may not be familiar to all. (We will just mention its presence).

Appendix 1 – Predicting future timber values

This appendix will help with the economic analysis we will use points drawn from it when we discuss the economic principles.

Appendix 2 – Tactical analysis and design

We will go over the examples highlighting the assumptions and the conclusions. The role of forest-level planning will again be re-emphasized.
