

# **Timber Supply Review**

## **Tree Farm Licences**

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**Forest Analysis and Inventory Branch  
Ministry of Forests, Lands and  
Natural Resource Operations**



## Timber supply review in BC

The Timber Supply Review (TSR) program began in 1992 to regularly update timber supply<sup>1</sup> in each of the timber supply areas (TSAs)<sup>2</sup> and tree farm licences (TFLs)<sup>3</sup> throughout the province. In accordance with Section 8 of the [Forest Act](#), allowable annual cuts (AACs)<sup>4</sup> for TSAs and TFLs must be redetermined at least once every 10 years.

### The objectives of the TSR are:

- Identify the best available economic, environmental and social information to support the chief forester's AAC determination. This should reflect current forest management practices, including their potential impact on short- and long-term timber supply;
- Identify the First Nations and public interests and concerns that may be impacted by an AAC determination;
- Identify where improved information is required to support future timber supply reviews.

### The role of the chief forester

Determining AACs for Crown forest land in British Columbia (BC) is one of the chief forester's most important responsibilities since it affects local and provincial economies, community stability and the environment—now and into the future.

The chief forester is an independent statutory decision maker and the AAC determination must be made with full administrative fairness. This requires utilization of the best available information for a wide range of environmental, social and economic factors as specified in Section 8 of the [Forest Act](#) including:

- the rate of timber production that may be sustained from the area;
- the short- and long-term implications to the province of alternative rates of timber harvesting from the area;
- constraints on the amount of timber produced from the area due to use of the forest for purposes other than timber production;
- the economic and social objectives of the Crown, for the area, the region and the province as expressed by the Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations; and
- abnormal insect or disease infestations and major salvage programs planned for the area.

Some of these factors can be measured and analysed—others cannot. Ultimately, the chief forester's determination is an independent professional judgment. The chief forester is not directed by the Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations when setting an AAC.

If significant new information becomes available or major changes occur to the land base or management assumptions, the chief forester may revisit the determination sooner than the 10 years required by legislation.

The chief forester may also choose to postpone a new determination by up to five years if timber supply in the unit is stable and there have been no significant changes in management or land use.

<sup>1</sup>**Timber supply** is the amount of timber that is projected to be available for harvesting within a specified time period, under a particular management regime.

<sup>3</sup>A **tree farm licence** is an agreement between the provincial government and a licensee which grants the licensee the rights to manage the land and harvest the timber on a defined area of Crown land in accordance with Section 35 of the [Forest Act](#).

<sup>2</sup>A **timber supply area** is an area of provincial Crown land designated by the Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations in accordance with Section 7 of the [Forest Act](#) to be managed for a range of objectives including timber production.

<sup>4</sup>**Allowable annual cut** is the maximum rate of timber harvest determined for an area under Section 8 of the [Forest Act](#), specified as a volume (cubic metres) of wood per year.

## The timber supply review process for TFLs

While the legal mandate and guiding principles for TFL and TSA AAC decisions are the same, the process for reviewing TFL AACs reflects the management responsibilities specified through Section 35 of the [Forest Act](#), which require TFL licensees to submit a management plan to the chief forester six months before the date the AAC must be determined.

The required content of a management plan is set out in the Tree Farm Licence Management Plan Regulation. It includes a description, map and history of the TFL, a list of the publicly available planning documents that are used to guide forest management in the TFL, a timber supply analysis and description of a strategy used to conduct public review of the plan.

In most cases, when the chief forester sets the AAC, the management plan is also approved.

The Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) is responsible for reviewing and approving all components of the TSR process.

The AAC determination and management plan approval for TFLs are completed through a process of four key steps that take approximately 20 months in total. Figure 1 illustrates the estimated time required for this process:

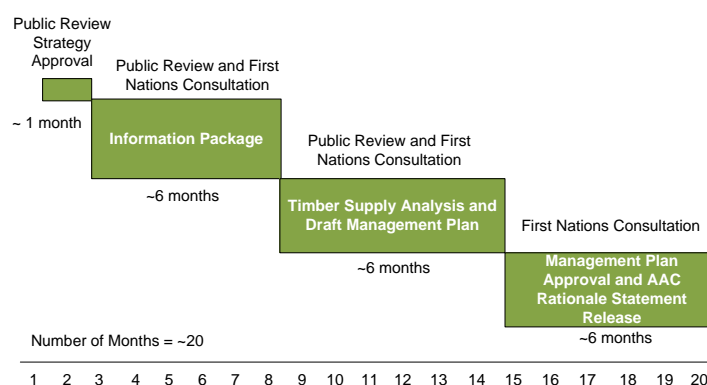


Figure 1. Timber Supply Review Process for TFLs.

### Step one: public review strategy

The licensee develops a public review strategy which outlines the opportunities for the public to review and comment on the newly proposed management plan. This strategy must be approved by FLNRO.

### Step two: information package

The licensee submits a timber supply analysis information package which details the technical forest management information such as inventory, expected timber growth rates, fish and wildlife management and other current forest management practices to be considered in the timber supply analysis. This package is reviewed by FLNRO and other agencies and made available to First Nations and the public for review and comment as described in the approved public review strategy.

### Step three: timber supply analysis and draft management plan

Computer models are used to project timber supply over multiple decades based on the forest inventory information, expected growth and yield, and current management practices. Since forests are complex and constantly changing, timber supply analysts evaluate the potential impact of uncertainty in the data or assumptions, on future timber supply.

Once the timber supply analysis is accepted by the ministry, the results are then included in a draft management plan and are made available to First Nations and the public for review and comment.

Licensees may hold open houses for communities in the vicinity of the TFL during the review period and are responsible for compiling and summarizing all public input received. The licensee is also responsible to summarize all First Nations input received throughout the TSR process.

### Step four: management plan approval and AAC rationale statement

After the public review period, the licensee submits the final management plan, which includes a summary of all First Nations input and public comments, to the chief forester.

To determine an AAC, the chief forester considers these submissions, the factors described in Section 8 of the [Forest Act](#), including the social and economic objectives of the Crown, and all other relevant information.

The chief forester then determines the AAC and approves the management plan. All the factors that were considered in the AAC determination are documented in a written rationale statement which is released to the licensee, First Nations and the public.

The chief forester also outlines any conditions for the approval of the management plan in a letter to the licensee.

### **First Nations engagement and public involvement in the timber supply review**

First Nations and public input are important in the timber supply review. During the TSR process, there are opportunities to attend meetings, review reports and provide input which the chief forester considers in an AAC determination.

First Nations engagement occurs throughout the TSR process. Figure 1 indicates where there are additional opportunities for First Nations and the public to review the information during the timber supply review.

### **A commitment to incorporate change**

The [Forest Act](#) requires the chief forester to redetermine the AAC for each TSA and TFL at least once every 10 years to ensure AACs are current and to reflect new information, forest management practices and government policies. Implementation of major government initiatives, significant land use changes or threats to the sustainability of the timber supply (e.g., insect epidemic) may have significant impacts on the timber supply in specific TSAs and TFLs. In these cases, the chief forester may determine the AACs more frequently than every 10 years.

For more information and to learn more about the Timber Supply Review process, please visit our website at:

**Forest Analysis and Inventory Branch:** <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts/>

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