



**Species of Management Concern & At-Risk Ecological
Communities Standard Operating Procedure**
Chinook Business Area
2025-04-22

INTRODUCTION

BCTS is committed to managing species-at-risk, identified through federal and provincial legislation, as well as to meet Sustainable Forest Management certification requirements. Additionally, some species and species habitat features do not have legal requirements but are still recognized by BCTS as needing additional management guidance. BCTS has similar legal and certification obligations related to the management of At-risk Ecological Communities (AREC). **Collectively, these species, habitats, and habitat features, are referred to as Species of Management Concern (SOMC).**

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is intended to provide guidance to all BCTS Chinook (TCH) staff, contractors, licensees, and permittees, related to SOMC. In this SOP, the term SOMC includes AREC, unless otherwise specified. The corporate framework on the development of SOMC programs is outlined in the provincial [BCTS Species and Ecosystems of Management Concern Guide](#).

SCOPE

This SOP covers all aspects of forestry planning, block and road development, and silviculture. It includes and applies to relevant TCH staff, licensees, and contractors working for TCH. This SOP is applicable to all BCTS operations in the Chilliwack, Squamish, and Haida Gwaii forest districts, and all land tenure in which TCH operates as a forest land management partner with 3rd party entities, e.g., community forests, disposition agreements, etc. Note that if timber is to be sold as SFI certified, then this and other aspects of the SFI Certification program must be applied.

This SOP applies to the current BCTS Chinook Focus Lists, that were developed through the corporate program using the methodology outlined in the provincial BCTS Species and Ecosystems of Management Concern Guide. The TCH Focus Lists were **reviewed and updated in March 2025**. These lists are available from the [BCTS external Environmental Management System \(EMS\) website](#).

OBJECTIVES

1. Meet legal and Sustainable Forestry Management certification obligations
2. Define the steps and procedures required to effectively manage and protect SOMC, during all phases of BCTS operations
3. Identify persons responsible to complete the procedures outlined in this SOP
4. Provide awareness to BCTS staff, contractors, Timber Sale Licence holders, and permittees in the identification and management of SOMC
5. Meet applicable land use plans and order commitments (e.g. *Haida Gwaii Land Use Objectives Order*¹)

¹ Note that the TCH Haida Gwaii Focus List incorporates requirements from the *Haida Gwaii Land Use Objectives Order*.



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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

1. SOMC Program Maintenance & Continual Improvement	
Procedure	Responsibility
<p>Complete an annual review of the TCH SOMC program, following the provincial operations annual review & updating. Note: the provincial operations review typically occurs in the fall; TCH will target an annual review for Q1 of the following calendar year. The annual TCH review should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Check the BCTS provincial operations SOMC intranet site and AREC intranet site for updates, and review the TCH SOMC program for alignment with the provincial operations resources· Ensure focus lists are updated with any changes to species listings· Include reference to any updates in training and when distributing SOMC documents· Ensure all links embedded in documents are functional/correctly routed	Planning Officer
2. TRAINING and AWARENESS	
Procedure	Responsibility
<p>Prepare and deliver SOMC awareness training, for all TCH field staff and contractors, as required and/or requested. Training should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Background on legal and certification requirements related to SOMC· An overview of the components of the SOMC program (e.g., SOP, focus list, field cards, tracking form, operator awareness sheet, etc.)· A review of at least some focus list species· What to do if an SOMC is observed· Additional available resources	Planning Officer
<p>Provide all TCH staff with access to, or a copy of, the SOMC program materials, which includes training. All SOMC program materials are currently available publicly on the Chinook EMS External Website, which must be kept up-to-date with any changes to the program.</p>	Planning Officer
<p>Complete SOMC awareness training bi-annually, or as specified in the latest BCTS training matrix. Attendance must be recorded for live webinar trainings. A record of completion must be documented for self-study training and sent to your supervisor.</p>	All TCH staff and contractors
<p>Timber Sale Licence (TSL) holders and contractors will be made aware of the SOMC program at pre-work meetings. BCTS will provide access to, or a copy of, the SOMC program materials, which includes training resources. See section 5. for more information on SOMC responsibilities at pre-work meetings.</p>	Operations Technologist



3. PLANNING / OFFICE ASSESSMENTS

Procedure	Responsibility
<p>Prior to starting any block or road layout works, identify any known occurrences of AREC or SOMC (or their habitat features) from the current relevant focus list, as part of the overlapping constraints evaluation for the development. This evaluation should be part of the Planning-to-Operations Handover (release) process. Sources that must be used to complete the evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · BC Conservation Data Center (CDC) species at risk mapping · iMap layer “wildlife – incidental observations” · BCTS internal SOMC data: Chinook SOMC Survey123 dashboard · Any Forest Stewardship Plan commitments, such as established (approved) and draft (proposed) UWR and WHA layers and their General Wildlife Measures (see TCH Constraints Viewer) <p>If any occurrences are identified, discuss the management implications. Consult a qualified Registered Professional Biologist where necessary, and for management guidance outside of current Best Management Practices.</p>	Operations Technologist, Practices Forester
<p>Prior to starting any block or road layout works, check for planned development overlap with Biogeoclimatic Ecological Classification (BEC) site series associated with AREC from the current relevant focus list. If overlap is found, follow the AREC Field Confirmation Procedures.</p>	Operations Technologist, Practices Forester

4. FIELD ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

Procedure	Responsibility
<p>Everyone in the field has a responsibility to observe <u>and</u> report potential SOMC. It is encouraged that multiphase contractors dedicate field time to this task, to avoid limiting the SOMC program to incidental observations.</p>	All TCH staff, contractors, and TSL holders
<p>If a potential SOMC is observed in the field:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not disturb the SOMC/AREC/feature 2. Document: record the date, species description, and location (latitude/longitude preferred), and any other relevant notes, and take photos and/or videos 3. Notify your TCH contract manager as soon as possible 4. Follow all tracking and reporting requirements (Section 7.) 	All TCH staff and contractors
<p>For TCH staff and multiphase contractors, if a potential SOMC is observed, follow confirmation processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · For AREC, follow the AREC Field Confirmation Procedures · For all SOMC, engage a qualified Registered Professional Biologist, if required 	All TCH staff and multiphase contractors
<p>Once a SOMC is confirmed, develop a site-specific management plan using any additional supplemental species information, such as relevant, current Best Management Plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · For AREC, follow the BCTS AREC Management Guidance · For red and blue listed ecological communities on Haida Gwaii, section 17 of the <i>Haida Gwaii Land Use Objectives Order</i> will take precedence over the 	Multiphase contractor, Practices Forester



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<p>BCTS AREC Management Guidance. For more information, see the <i>Haida Gwaii Forest Stewardship Plan #768</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage a qualified Registered Professional Biologist where required. 	
<p>Depending on the SOMC or AREC observed, and site specifics, management options will vary and may include the following.</p> <p>Avoidance/protection: Exclude the SOMC habitat feature or AREC from the Exhibit A area, or protect it through establishment of some form of reserve within the TSL. <i>Note: If it is incorporated into a WTRA ensure the associated RESULTS submission includes the appropriate silviculture reserve objective code. It is recommended the reserve be excluded from the Exhibit A area to ensure licensees cannot relocate the reserve.</i></p> <p>Modified practices: Results or strategies from an approved FSP, professional recommendations, or approved Best Management Practices may be appropriate to include in the TSL Highlights, Site Plan and/or TSL document. Contact BCTS Provincial Operations staff if advice is required.</p>	<p align="center">All TCH staff and contractors</p>
<p>Identify the location of known occurrences of SOMC habitat features or AREC on the Site Plan, Road Construction, and Harvest Plan maps. Identify any areas of concern or timing restrictions relating to the management of the identified features, including any species or site-specific management requirements, if applicable. Ensure Site Plans contain comments documenting what efforts were made checking for SOMC, even if none were identified.</p>	<p align="center">Multiphase contractor, Practices Forester</p>

5. PRE-WORKS	
Procedure	Responsibility
<p>Timber Sale License and other contractual documents: Insert any relevant clauses or wording related to timing restrictions or other management requirements associated with identified SOMC. Wording of any such clauses should be reviewed by BCTS Provincial Operations to ensure enforceability. If there are any legally binding requirements, they must be included in the TSL.</p>	<p align="center">Operations Technologist</p>
<p>For pre-works with TSL holders, TCH staff must review the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> SOMC operator awareness reference sheet Any known SOMC in the vicinity of the planned activities BCTS' plan to manage any known SOMC, including timing restrictions or any other requirements for the TSL, as well as any relevant results and strategies in the Forest Stewardship Plan Ensure the TSL holder understands the reporting procedure if an SOMC is observed 	<p align="center">Operations Technologist</p>
<p>For pre-works with contractors (e.g. multiphase, engineering, silviculture, etc.) – TCH must review the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOMC Focus List(s) Any known SOMC in the vicinity of the planned activities Any management strategies to be considered Reporting procedure if an SOMC is observed (Section 7.) 	<p align="center">Operations Technologist, Engineering Officer, Engineering Technologist</p>



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6. FOREST OPERATIONS (HARVEST, ROAD BUILDING, SILVICULTURE)	
Procedure	Responsibility
<p>Monitoring operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ensure that all applicable SOMC management strategies are properly implemented by contractors and TSL holders. · Follow current established Environmental Management System (EMS) inspection and monitoring requirements <p>Non-compliance and non-conformances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · If any SOMC requirements were not met, conduct an EMS Incident Investigation, ensuring details are documented on the Incident Report Form (CHK-009) and entered into the Land and Resource Manager (LRM) EMS Certification Module. Notify Practices Forester and Certification Standards Officer (CSO). · If a potential non-compliance with a legal requirement is suspected, Compliance and Enforcement (C&E) must be notified. 	Operations Technologist
<p>For forest operations under BCTS Contract: If a <u>previously unidentified</u> SOMC (including habitat features) is discovered by a contractor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Follow reporting procedures (section 7) · Develop and implement a site-specific management plan for the species by consulting a qualified Registered Professional Biologist, using the AREC Management Guidance, or by referencing current Best Management Procedures developed by a qualified Registered Professional Biologist. · Modify the works contract if/as required to implement management. 	TCH staff (contract managers)
<p>For forest operations under a TSL: If a <u>previously unidentified</u> SOMC is discovered by the TSL holder, TCH can support the TSL holder to create and implement a site-specific management plan for the species or feature. Methods of TCH support could include sharing relevant BCTS procedures and/or providing professional advice to develop a management plan. Implementation of any management requirements is the responsibility of the TSL holder.</p>	TCH staff (Planning Officer, Practices Forester, Operations Technologist, etc.)
<p>First Nations notification: If a <u>previously unidentified</u> SOMC is confirmed, and the applicable First Nation has requested to be notified, the Indigenous Relations Liaison must be notified and will complete any required process. If you are unsure if this step is required, check with the Indigenous Relations Liaison.</p>	TCH staff; Indigenous Relations Liaison



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7. TRACKING & REPORTING	
Procedure	Responsibility
<p>If an SOMC is observed the occurrence must be documented & reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · For contractors, complete the Species of Management Concern Tracking & Reporting Form and submit to BCTS · For TCH staff, complete a survey record (TCH SOMC Survey) in Survey123. This method is preferred; however, BCTS staff may also use the above form. <p>A copy of all completed Species of Management Concern Tracking & Reporting Forms must be emailed to the TCH SOMC specialist (current: Planning Officer).</p>	All TCH staff; Contractors
All submitted SOMC observations will be tracked by the TCH SOMC specialist (current: Planning Officer) in a master tracking database (e.g., TCH SOMC Survey123 dashboard).	Planning Officer
<p>If an SOMC is observed by a multiphase contractor during block development, upload the Species of Management Concern Tracking & Reporting Form in LRM under the block activities.</p> <p>If no SOMC are observed during development, a form does not need to be uploaded. However, the block activities in LRM must still be updated to indicate assessment has been completed (given field checks and office assessments have been completed as per sections 3 and 4).</p>	Multiphase contractor
<p>Submit spatial data to BCTS for all observed SOMC as per the “Digital Submission Standards – User Guide” (tch_root\Contractor_Workspace\LRM\Documentation\Spatial_Data_Standards).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Submit AREC as a BCTS layout polygon feature (“SAR rare ECOSYS”) · For all other species and habitat features, select from BCTS layout point features (“wildlife feature”, “SAR wildlife tree”, “wildlife point non-SAR”), and add comments to provide more information. 	Multiphase contractor
When the final development package submission is received, update the local layers, per standard process.	BCTS GIS Staff
<p>CDC Reporting: Submit occurrences of SOMC to the CDC, using the Incidental Observations submission process. Required reporting to the CDC includes all Red and Blue-listed species and their nests or dens, as well as species included on Schedule 1 of the <i>Species at Risk Act</i> and their nests or dens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Contractors are responsible for reporting their observations to the CDC, as required. · TCH staff observations will be reported to the CDC annually by the TCH SOMC specialist (current: Planning Officer). 	Contractors, Planning Officer
Additional Haida Gwaii Reporting: Complete any additional reporting requirements per applicable legislation (e.g., reporting to the <i>Solutions Table</i> as specified in the <i>Haida Gwaii Forest Stewardship Plan</i> , which reflects requirements in the <i>Haida Gwaii Land Use Objectives Order</i>).	Haida Gwaii Practices Forester (with support of Planning Officer)



DEFINITIONS

Responsibility: identifies the positions primarily responsible for implementing the corresponding procedure. These responsibilities may vary between field teams, accounted for by listing multiple positions at times. *Operations Technologist* refers to multi-phase contract managers, silviculture specialists, and/or conformance/TSL specialists where relevant. *Forest Technicians* may also be included in this category where relevant to each field team.

TCH SOMC Specialist: current for 2025 – BCTS Chinook Planning Officer

Species of Management Concern (SOMC): Specific **species, ecosystems, habitats, and habitat features** that occur within BCTS operating areas and have the potential be adversely affected by forestry activities. Remember, SOMC includes AREC! This includes SOMC that area:

- provincial Red and Blue Listed animals and plants (vascular plants, moss, and lichen) species,
- NatureServe Global G1/G2 species,
- *Species at Risk Act* (SARA), Schedule 1 listed species,
- *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA), *Forest Planning and Practices Regulation* (FPPR) Section 7 (*Government Action Regulation* (GAR)) species,
- species included in the *Identified Wildlife Management Strategy* (IWMS), or
- species identified in the *BC Wildlife Act*.

At-Risk Ecological Communities (AREC): Ecological communities that have specific attributes that make these ecological community ‘at risk’. AREC must have specific attributes (such as stand age, structure and species composition) as defined in reports that can be located BC Species and Ecosystem Explorer website.

BCTS currently only has an obligation to manage AREC under our Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) certification. The SFI identifies AREC based on conservation status:

- critically imperiled and imperilled ecological communities (NatureServe G1/G2/S1/S2),
- Red-listed ecological communities,
- Blue-listed ecological communities, or
- ecological communities identified under FRPA or in land use objectives

BCTS completed a risk-ranking procedure on AREC meeting the above criteria, to produce the current focus list. Additionally, SOMC from the *Hadia Gwaii Land Use Objectives Order* were included.

It is important to be aware of [new protections for ecological communities after recent updates to the Forest and Range Practices Act](#). FRPA now defines **ecological communities** as “a group of different species occupying a particular area.” By explicitly defining “ecological communities” in FRPA, they can now be protected using existing regulatory tools. The Government Actions Regulation (GAR) now includes authorities to manage ecological communities in a fashion similar to the management of categories of species at risk, regionally important wildlife or specified ungulate species.



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ACRONYMS

AREC At Risk Ecological Communities

BCTS British Columbia Timber Sales

CDC British Columbia Conservation Data Center

EMS Environmental Management System

SOMC Species of Management Concern

SOP Standard Operating Procedure

TCH BCTS Chinook Business Area

TSL Timber Sale Licence

SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT RESOURCES

BC Conservation Data Centre:

- iMap tool <http://maps.gov.bc.ca/ess/hm/cdc/>
- Species and Ecosystem Explorer <https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/>
- Submit Wildlife and Plant Data – Incidental Observations
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/wildlife/wildlife-data-information/submit-wildlife-data-information>

BCTS EMS Website (Public): <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/bc-timber-sales/forest-certification/ems-sfm>

BCTS SOMC Intranet Site (BCTS internal use only):

<https://intranet.gov.bc.ca/for/bcts/sustainability/sustainability/species-of-management-concern>

BCTS AREC Intranet Site (BCTS internal use only):

<https://intranet.gov.bc.ca/for/bcts/sustainability/sustainability/at-risk-ecological-communities>

- AREC Field Confirmation Procedures:
<https://intranet.gov.bc.ca/for/bcts/sustainability/sustainability/at-risk-ecological-communities/field-confirmation-procedures>
- AREC Management Guidance:
<https://intranet.gov.bc.ca/for/bcts/sustainability/sustainability/at-risk-ecological-communities/arec-program-implementation>