

## Background

- BEC mapping and site classification are fundamental to many forestry, planning, conservation, and environmental assessment initiatives.
- The most current version of BEC mapping is version 8, released in January 2012 and available on GeoBC and BECWeb - <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hre/becweb/>. Users should check this site for updates each year or use the GeoBC (LRDW) website for the "official" version.
- In the North East and Skeena Regions, the most recent site series classifications are LMH 65 published in 2011 and officially implemented by government January 15, 2012. LMH 65 presents a revision to the entire Boreal White and Black Spruce (BWBS) zone and relevant classifications presented therein should replace those from LMH 22 and LMH 26. <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/pubs/Docs/Lmh/Lmh65.htm> .
- In the Omineca Region, the north central Mackenzie TSA BWBS units in LMH 54 are also replaced by those in LMH 65. Over the next 3-4 years, new classifications may be presented for BGCs found in the Prince George TSA such as some BGCs in LMH 54 and within a new LMH guide for the Robson Valley Wet Trench which has to date only been applied in draft form.
- In the Omineca and North East Regions, the SWB zone currently mapped as the SWBmk subzone variant in which there are increasing development pressures from the energy and mining sectors has been identified as requiring updated consideration to determine if subzone variants exist and where the SWBmk boundary would then be. Previously timber considerations and thus need for mapping were low but this has now changed with new development regimes.
- In the Omineca region rare Ostrich fern ecosystems exist in the ICH (ICHvk2/05-red listed (CDC, 2009) and SBS (SBSvk/07 and SBSmh/08-red listed (CDC, 2004)) zones some of which are classified with site series but some that have not been classified such as those in the SBSdw3. More data in classified units is required and classification of units where they were previously unclassified is required.
- This update provides a summary of current and proposed changes to BEC in the Omineca and North East Regions.

## Changes to the North East Region

- The release of LMH 65 January 15, 2012 saw the following changes:
  - No BEC lines moved in the NE but in NW/Cassiar previous 1:600K mapping is now mapped to 1:20K base resulting in considerable line movement including the BWBS units.
  - Changes to BEC coding in LMH 65 have occurred and should now be applied. See the following link for further information ( <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/pubs/Docs/En/En106.pdf> )
  - Based on improved climatic delineation and improved data in BWBS zones the following changes to BGC labelling and site series have occurred:
    - BWBSdk1 (Rupert-Mtn) ->now **BWBSdk**
    - BWBSdk2 (Liard Plain) + BWBSmw2 (Liard Plateau) ->now **BWBSmk**
    - BWBSmw1 ->now **BWBSmw**
    - BWBSwk1 -> no change
    - BWBSwk2 -> no change
    - BWBSwk3 -> **New Site Series** (site series previously un-described)
    - For each BGC equivalent Broadleaved seral units have also been included in LMH 65 and along with non forested site units
- The following items have also been identified as requiring attention in the North East Region.
  - The ESSFmv2 has an oakfern unit that does not exist south of Tumbler Ridge
  - The ESSFmv2 parkland needs to be mapped

- The SBSwk2 has some considerable differences between plateau and mountain sites that need to be identified
- The SWB in the North East Region requires site series classification. Currently the only SWB site series classification exists for SWBmk Mackenzie TSA (LMH 54). Though this will provide a framework to be tested and possibly adapted in the North East Region, it will require considerable refinement.

## Changes to Omineca Region

- The BWBSdk1 of Mackenzie TSA in Omineca Region (LMH 54) and in Skeena Region (LMH 26) is now labelled ad BWBSdk. Site series there within have undergone changes in edaphic distribution and have had phases included. Therefore, the site series provided in LMH 65 for BWBSdk now supersede those of the BWBSdk1 in LMH 54 and LMH 26.
- In 1996 a document entitled "Draft field guide for site identification and interpretation for the Rocky Mountain Trench" was produced in the then Prince George Region for the area within Robson Valley forest District. Some BGCs have been tested in the draft, have been in use since that time and appear to be accurate while others have either not been sufficiently tested or are not accurate. The following activities will be occurring regarding this guide intended for production within the next 3 years.
  - SBSvk and SBSwk1 valley bottoms in side drainages require, confirmation of BGC, valley pinching, assessment of site series range within
  - Within ICHmm and ICHwk3 where SBS like forest exists in valley bottoms possible consideration as cold air site series within will be given if site series range within is not sufficient to warrant it as BGC or BGC phase
  - ICHmm valley pinching is required in side drainages
  - Very few plots exist in the ESSFmm1 and questions as to where the southerly ESSFwc2 boundary lies exist. Thus, what is now mapped on the west side of Robson Valley as ESSFmm1 may in fact be ESSFwc2
  - SBSdh1 appear to extend further into the side drainages on the east side of the Robson Valley. Therefore, adjustments to boundaries for SBSdh1 may result in decreases to what is now classified ICHmm.
  - SBSdh1 and SBSdh2 (mostly in Robson Park), may not be variants. What is now currently classified as SBSdh2 may be more similar to south eastern MS than SBS. If this were the case the SBSdh2 variant would change to MS, and the SBSdh1 would now be labelled SBSdh.
  - Parkland and ESSF boundary elevation as currently mapped is being verified and updated if necessary.
- Currently more plot data for the ICHvk2/05 (western red cedar-ostrich fern-devil's club) red listed (CDC, 2009) ecosystem are being collected and will be added to the BEC data base. A project to develop a predictive map for spatially locating ostrich fern sites is underway with plans to apply it to other subzone variants as well. Findings are being incorporated into old growth management and wildlife habitat areas and will be shared with the BC Conservation Data Centre with new plot data added to the BEC database.
- SWBmk in the Omineca/North East Regions is classified in LMH 54 but this and a newer draft version of a NE SWB classification are questionable and require more field work in order to determine their applicability and/or to develop further variant or site series level classifications.