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## Information to Avoid/Minimize Impacts to Environmental Values

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The Northeast Ecosystems Section of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations would like to provide some information on environmental values, including species and ecosystems at risk, and guidance to minimize impacts on these values. To ensure your proposed activity does have minimal impact, please review Guideline and Best Management Practice (BMP) documents *that are applicable* to your activity. These documents provide suggested practices, that when implemented, will assist you in avoiding and/or minimizing impacts to environmental values associated with your proposed activities.

Regional Guideline and BMP documents are available at:

[http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/esd/distdata/Peace\\_Region\\_Wildlife\\_Values/Industrial\\_Sectors/Best\\_Management\\_Practices/](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/esd/distdata/Peace_Region_Wildlife_Values/Industrial_Sectors/Best_Management_Practices/).

Provincial Guideline and BMP documents are available at:

<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/BMP/bmpintro.html>

Guidance specifically for local governments and land owners:

- Develop with Care 2014: Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia - <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare/#Main>
- Guidelines for Amphibians and Reptile Conservation during Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia (2014) - <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare/#Main>
- Guidelines for Raptor Conservation during Urban and Rural Development in British Columbia (2013) - <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare/#Main>

*Please note that these sites are routinely updated. Prior to commencing work, it is recommended that you check the weblinks above to see if relevant Guideline or BMP document(s) have been revised or added.*

### **Timing of Activities**

To reduce the risk of adverse impacts your activity may have on fish and wildlife species during sensitive life requisite periods (e.g. waterbird nesting, fish spawning, caribou calving), it is advisable that you undertake activities within the appropriate least risk windows. The above mentioned Regional Guideline and BMP weblink provides a "Least Risk Windows.pdf" for your reference and planning use.

Vegetation removal, if occurring during a critical window can negatively impact a number of fish and wildlife species, in particular, birds species. Birds in Canada are protected under provincial and territorial statute (i.e. *Wildlife Act*), in addition to the federal *Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA)* and its' *Migratory Birds Regulations (MBR)*.

Section 34 of the BC *Wildlife Act* stipulates:

**34** A person commits an offence if the person, except as provided by regulation, possesses, takes, injures, molests or destroys

(a) a bird or its egg,

(b) the nest of an eagle, peregrine falcon, gyrfalcon, osprey, heron or burrowing owl, or

(c) the nest of a bird not referred to in paragraph (b) when the nest is occupied by a bird or its egg.

The *MBCA* and *MBR* also have general prohibitions against the disturbance and destruction of nests, eggs and the depositing of harmful substances into areas frequented by migratory birds. Migratory birds, the nests of migratory birds and/or their eggs can be inadvertently harmed or disturbed (often referred to as incidental take) as a result of many activities – including, but not limited to, clearing trees and other vegetation and draining or flooding land. As such, to minimize the possibility of contravening this federal law, you are advised to exhibit due diligence in regards to your responsibilities under the *MBCA* and *MBR* and review the direction on the following Environment Canada website: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/paom-itmb/default.asp?lang=En&n=C51C415F-1>

### **Works In and Around Watercourses**

For proposed work in and around watercourses (e.g. wetlands, seasonal or dry creeks, streams, rivers, lakes), you *must* comply with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal enactments (e.g. federal *Fisheries Act*, provincial *Water Act* etc.).

One of the most important pieces of legislation regarding the conservation and protection of fish and fish habitat in Canada is the federal *Fisheries Act*. The *Fisheries Act* requires that projects avoid causing [serious harm to fish](#) unless authorized by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. This applies to work being conducted in or near waterbodies that support fish that are part of a commercial, recreational or Aboriginal fishery, or to fish that support such a fishery. Prior to commencing work, it is your responsibility to determine whether or not your project needs to be reviewed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. More information about this is matter is available on-line at: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pnw-ppe/index-eng.html>.

Furthermore, all proposed works in and around a watercourse must also adhere to the requirements of the provincial *Water Act*. Information to determine what works require a *Water Act* Notification or application for an Approval is available at:

[http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/water\\_rights/licence\\_application/section9](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/water_rights/licence_application/section9).

To help inform you of fish and fish habitat values in your project area, you can consult HabitatWizard, which is accessible at: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/habwiz/>.

### **Species and Ecosystems at Risk**

For information on species and ecosystems at risk can be found on the BC Species and Ecosystems Explorer located at <http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/>, as well as the Ministry of Environment webpage <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/atrisk/red-blue.htm> . Data (e.g., reports, databases, maps etc.) on a wide range of wildlife species can be found on the Species Inventory Web Explorer at [http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/siwe/search\\_reset.do](http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/siwe/search_reset.do) .

The distribution of species and ecosystems at risk can change over time. To ensure your activities do not adversely impact an at risk species, it is advisable to also consult the Conservation Data Centre (<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cdc/>) to determine the occurrence of at risk plants and animals in your project area. If your activities are deemed to physically overlap with the occurrence of a species at risk or are in close proximity to such an occurrence to have an indirect project effect on the species, it is recommended that a qualified professional undertake appropriate field studies (as required), prior to commencement of on-the-ground activities, to confirm the species occurrence, abundance and distribution and if necessary, develop relevant mitigation plans to avoid/minimize impacts to subject animal or plant species.

### **Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMP's)**

Several LRMP's exist for the Northeast Region. These documents outline a strategic planning framework for resource development while providing for the protection of environmental and recreation resource values through the creation and implementation of objectives and strategies to manage and maintain these values over the planning area. You are advised to review the relevant LRMP for your project area and consider that guidance in your planning of activities. The Fort St. John, Dawson Creek and Fort Nelson LRMP's are available at: <https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/tasb/slrp/> .

### **Reclamation and Invasive Plant Management**

It is recommended that all disturbed areas associated with your project be reclaimed as soon as possible to ensure sites are stable and erosion does not become a project concern. Re-establishing vegetation on exposed soils will also greatly assist with invasive plant management. The Peace-Liard Re-Vegetation Manual is a good reference for revegetation in northeast B.C. and should be consulted if you require guidance for revegetation planning, native plant material, seed mixes, seeding equipment and timing and rates for planting or other aspects of revegetation. This manual is available on line at: [http://prrd.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/NEIPC\\_Reveg\\_manual\\_PeaceLiard\\_April2010\\_002.pdf](http://prrd.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/NEIPC_Reveg_manual_PeaceLiard_April2010_002.pdf). In addition, a variety of sector specific invasive plant BMP's are available on the Peace River Regional Districts (PRRD) website at: <http://prrd.bc.ca/services/invasive-plants/>.

For more information, please contact FrontCounter BC in Fort St. John at (250) 787-3411.