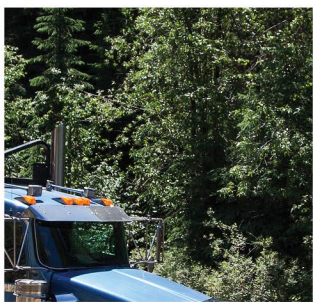
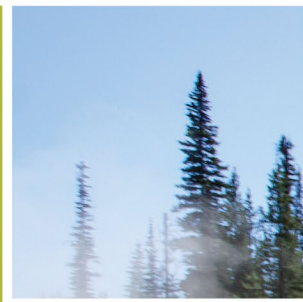




BCTS
BC Timber Sales

At Risk Ecological Communities Awareness Training



AREC Awareness Training Overview

BCTS Seaward April 2025

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- Introduction
 - What are At Risk Ecological Communities?
 - Why protect them?
- SFI Certification
- AREC Program
 - SOP
 - Focus List
 - AREC Field Confirmation Procedures
- Resources



Ecological Community Definition



The BC Conservation Data Centre defines **Ecological Community** as *plant associations from the Vegetation Classification of the Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification, and other natural plant communities including both forested and non-forested ecosystems.*

FRPA defines an **Ecological Community** as *a group of different species occupying a particular area.*

Note: Great Bear Rainforest Order and the Identified Wildlife Management Strategy use the term Plant Communities

What are At Risk Ecological Communities?

BCTS has both legal and stewardship obligations to manage and conserve specific species, ecosystems and habitats that might occur within BCTS operating areas and be adversely affected by forestry activities.

For BCTS, an At Risk Ecological Community (AREC) is an ecological community that meets one or more of the following attributes:

- Red or Blue listed (BC Conservation Data Centre)
- Critically imperiled or imperiled (NatureServe)
- Listed on a schedule of legislated Orders, i.e. GBRO
- included on the list of plant communities under the Identified Wildlife Management Strategy.

Why Protect AREC?

- To maintain biological diversity
- To comply with provincial legislation - *Forest and Range Practices Act* and any applicable land use orders
- Aligns with the Province's commitment to establish Ecosystem Health as an overarching priority (OGSR Recommendation 2)
- Required to maintain Sustainable Forestry Initiative certification
- Professional due diligence and Code of Ethics



Sustainable Forestry Initiative

BC Timber Sales is certified under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Forest Management Standard (2022)

Objective 4 . Conservation of Biological Diversity

Performance Measure 4.2: *Certified Organizations shall protect threatened and endangered species, critically imperiled and imperiled species (Forests with Exceptional Conservation Values), and natural communities and old-growth forests.*

- Indicator 4.2.1: *Program to protect threatened and endangered species.*
- Indicator 4.2.2: *Program to locate and protect known sites of flora and fauna associated with viable occurrences of critically imperiled and imperiled species and ecological communities, defined as Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value.*



AREC Program

	<p>Species of Management Concern & At Risk Ecological Community Standard Operating Procedure Seaward-Tlasta Business Area 2025-04-02</p>
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INTRODUCTION

BCTS is committed to manage 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. Together these species are referred to as Species of Management Concern (SOMC). BCTS has similar legal and certification obligations related to the management of At Risk Ecological Communities (AREC).

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is intended to provide guidance to all BCTS staff and Multiphase Development (MPAD) contractors related to BCTS SOMC and AREC programs. The corporate framework on the development of SOMC and AREC programs is outlined in the provincial [BCTS Species and Ecosystems of Management Concern Guide](https://intranet.gov.bc.ca/assets/intranet/flnrord/bcts/tos/sustainability/somc/somc_program_guide.pdf) (https://intranet.gov.bc.ca/assets/intranet/flnrord/bcts/tos/sustainability/somc/somc_program_guide.pdf).

SCOPE

This SOP covers all phases of Primary Forest Activities (including Silviculture Activities). It includes and applies to relevant Business Area staff, and contractors working for BCTS. In addition, licensees and permittees have requirements to follow as identified in this SOP and Appendix 4 is applicable to them.



Intended For (✓): Others available upon request	BCTS staff	MPAD	Road Contractors	Silviculture Contractors	TSL Licensees and Permittees
SoMC & AREC SOP	✓	✓			
Appendix 1 SoMC & AREC Management Guide	✓				
Appendix 2a Animal and Plant Species List	✓	✓			
Appendix 2b AREC list	✓	✓			
Appendix 3 SoMC Field Cards ¹	✓	✓			
Appendix 4 SoMC Operator Awareness sheets ²	✓		✓	✓	✓
Appendix 5 BCTS SoMC Field Observation Form	✓	✓			
Appendix 6 AREC Field Procedures and AREC Field Procedure Cards	✓	✓			

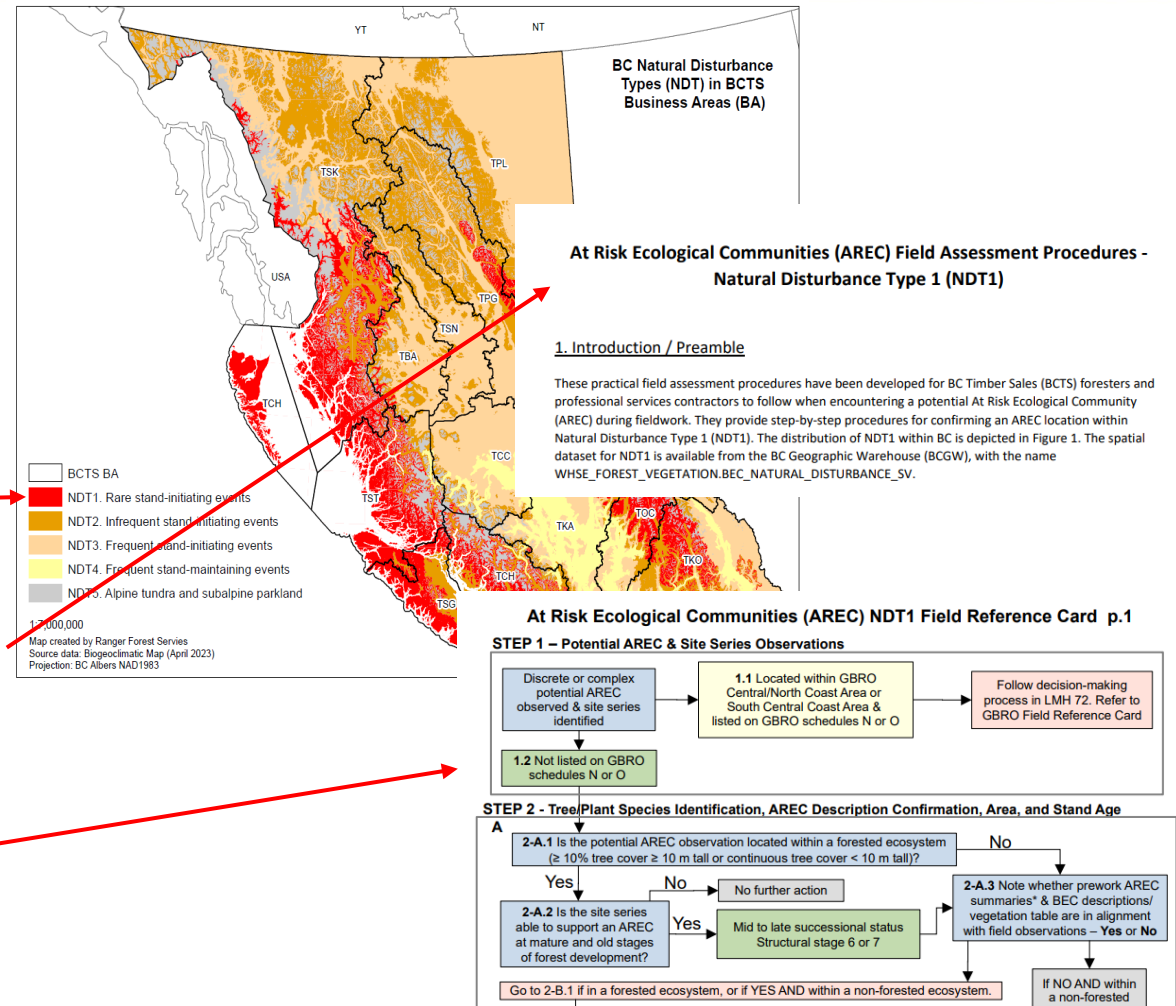
} AREC Program Components

AREC Program Implementation

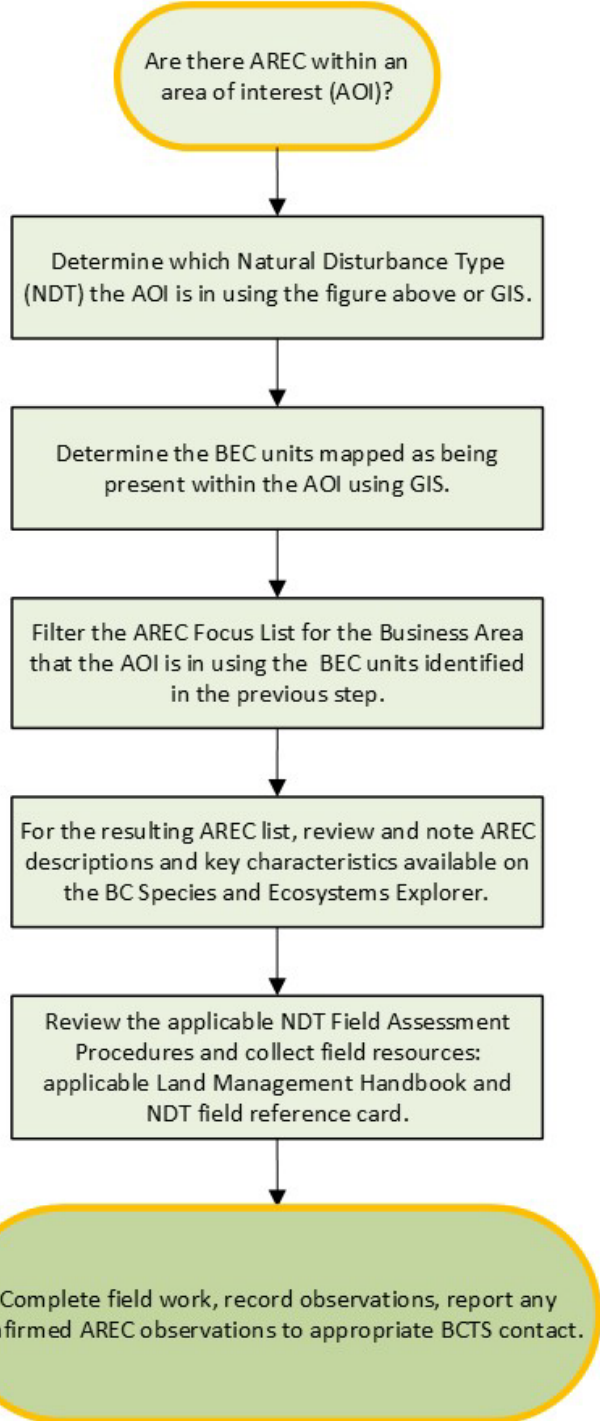
Field Assessment Procedures

Practical field assessment procedures were developed as a tool to confirm the presence of a potential AREC during fieldwork.

- Derived for Natural Disturbance Types (Biodiversity Guidebook 1995).
 - Seaward is mainly in NDT 1
- Procedures include step-by-step directions to follow and data to collect with additional details beyond site series
- A field reference card is available including visual flowcharts with supporting figures



AREC Process



This flowchart outlines a process to determine which field procedure to use and the suggested pre-field planning steps. Additional details on office prework are outlined in section 4.1 of each AREC Field Assessment Procedure.

Essential Resources:

- BCTS Seaward AREC SOP and Focus List
- Land Management Handbook for the BEC unit – 26, 28, 72
- NDT 1 AREC Field Assessment Procedure and Field Reference Card
- Completed prework – focussed AREC list for AOI, descriptions of potential AREC for the BEC unit, stand age
- Field equipment, including increment borer for aging



If an AREC is confirmed in the field record the data outlined in Section 4.6 (Step 5) of the assessment procedures and the field reference cards.

Communicate the observation to the BCTS Contract Coordinator.

The BCTS Practices Forester reports observations, which can be submitted to the BC Conservation Data Centre as Incidental Observations: [Submit Wildlife / Plant Data and Information - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/conservation/data-centre/submit-wildlife-plant-data-and-information)

and informs the BCTS Planning Team for documentation and tracking.

- BC Conservation Data Centre Species and Ecosystems Explorer: [BC Species & Ecosystems Explorer - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)
- Biodiversity Guidebook (1995): [Biodiversity Guidebook \(Forest Practices Code of British Columbia, September 1995\)](#)
- Field Manual for Describing Terrestrial Ecosystems 2nd edition (2010) – Reprinted in 2015 – Land Management Handbook 25: [Deif0 Web Frnt Cvr-2010.indd](#)
- Guidelines to support implementation of the Great Bear Rainforest Order with respect to Old Forest and Listed Plant Communities (2019) – Land Management Handbook 72: [LMH72.pdf](#)
- Field Verification of Priority Old Forest Deferral Areas: Technical Guidance (2022): [Field Verification of Priority Old Forest Deferral Areas: Technical Guidance - Version 3.1 \(Corrected: November 3, 2022\)](#)
- **NEW** - Land Management Handbook 78 A Guide to Provincial Information on Ecosystems and Ecological Communities in Coastal BC 2025 - [A Guide to Provincial Information on Ecosystems and Ecological Communities in Coastal British Columbia](#)

BCTS Intranet Site – AREC Program: [At risk ecological communities - Ministry of](#)

▼ [At risk ecological communities](#)

[AREC focus lists](#)

[AREC field confirmation procedures](#)

[AREC program implementation](#)

[AREC awareness training](#)

- 🕒 *Coming Soon – more AREC Resources*
 - + MOF Vegetation Ecologist contacts
 - + FAQ

Ministry of Forests > BC Timber Sales > Sustainability and forestry > Sustainability > [At risk ecological communities](#) >


[AREC focus lists](#)

[AREC field confirmation procedures](#)

[AREC program implementation](#)

[AREC awareness training](#)

AREC awareness training



General AREC awareness slides have been created to provide content on BCTS AREC programs, how they were developed and details relating to legal and certification. Business areas can use these slide templates to develop training presentations for their staff and contractors.

- [AREC Awareness Training Template \(PPTX, 7MB\)](#)

Orientation sessions

An at risk ecological communities (AREC) orientation session was delivered and recorded in April 2023. The session provided an overview of the various contract products and tools, how they were developed and their intended use.

The video recording as well as the power point slides are available to review:

- [AREC orientation session \(Video\)](#)
- [AREC program presentation \(PPTX, 4MB\)](#)

A session on the implementation of the corporate AREC resources was delivered in February 2024. The session outlined the application of the NDT 2 Field Assessment Procedures to a coastal block as a case study. The suggested office pre-work preparation was covered as well as the individual steps of the procedure to assess the presence of an AREC in the field.

Although this session was intended for a coastal audience the general process and steps could be translated to all BCTS business areas by adjusting the selected focus list and the applicable NDT procedure.

- [AREC coastal session \(Video\)](#)
- [AREC coastal presentation \(PPTX, 7MB\)](#)