



Ministry of Forests



BCTS
BC Timber Sales

Guidance on BCTS Implementation of Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) Old Growth Deferral Polygon Recommendations

May 15, 2023

The following is considered as direction to BC Timber Sales (BCTS) operations in areas that overlap the Old Growth Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) deferral polygons. It is intended to be supplementary to the [Ministry's Field Verification Technical Guidance](#) (July 20, 2022). Where inconsistencies exist between the Field Verification Guidance and the contents of this memo, this memo should be considered as the BCTS approach.

Where Field Verification is Required

- Field verification is not required outside of TAP polygons. BCTS road and timber sale license (TSL) development should proceed as usual outside of TAP polygons.

First Nations TAP Engagement Status and Associated BCTS Actions

1. In situations where First Nations have indicated they do not support TAP deferrals:
 - a. For areas that are indicated as the TAP Remnant Old Ecosystem, field verify the polygons and maintain deferral if they meet the criteria. Areas indicated as TAP Ancient and/or Priority Big-treed criteria are available for harvest.
 - b. If field verification in TAP polygons indicates Remnant Old Ecosystem criteria are not present, proceed with development.
 - c. Where harvest proceeds under 1.b. reasonable effort must be made to identify replacement area consistent with Ministry guidance and the Replacement section of this memo.
 - d. Replacement is not required for harvest occurring under 1.a. (i.e., Ancient and Priority Big-treed polygons).
2. In situations where First Nations have indicated more time is required or no response has been provided regarding TAP deferrals:
 - a. Field verify the TAP polygons and maintain deferral of areas that meet the Remnant Old Ecosystem criteria. Areas that meet the Ancient and/or Priority Big-treed criteria are available for harvest.
 - b. If field verification in TAP polygons indicates Remnant Old Ecosystem criteria are not present, proceed with development.

- c. Where harvest proceeds under 2.a. or 2.b. reasonable effort must be made to identify replacement area consistent with Ministry guidance and the Replacement section of this memo.
3. In situations where First Nations have indicated they support TAP deferrals:
 - a. Field verify the TAP polygons and maintain the deferral of areas that meet the Ancient, Remnant Old Ecosystem and Priority Big-treed criteria.
 - b. If field verification in TAP polygons indicates Ancient, Remnant Old Ecosystem and/or Priority Big-treed criteria are not present, proceed with development.
 - c. Where harvest proceeds under 3.b. reasonable effort must be made to identify replacement area consistent with Ministry guidance and the Replacement section of this memo.

Road/Trail Guidance

- Guidance in this section is subject to limitations in the First Nations section above.
- The objective is to mitigate unintended timber isolation resulting from TAP deferral polygons. Road/trail access is permitted through TAP polygons where there is no other practicable alternative route available. A practicable alternative is one that can be implemented successfully and includes consideration for being both practical and reasonably economically feasible. Due diligence documentation should be prepared where encroachments are deemed necessary.
- Effort should be made to minimize the extent of road/trail encroachment through TAP polygons by narrowing right of way clearing to extent possible.
- Where road/trail encroachments occur within TAP polygons, replacement is required consistent with Ministry guidance and the Replacement section of this memo.

Slivers

- Guidance in this section is subject to limitations in the First Nations section above.
- For pre-existing BCTS developments, thresholds for minimum mapped polygons used for RESULTS reporting can be applied to the management of TAP polygon overlaps. Specifically, individual TAP/cutblock overlaps less than or equal to 0.1 hectare and cutblock aggregate TAP overlaps less than or equal to 0.25 ha DO NOT require re-engineering, reporting to Districts or a replacement area.
- For new BCTS development it is expected that engineering will be conducted in a way that avoids TAP polygons to the extent possible. Should slivers arise, the same thresholds will apply.

Replacement

- As described under the First Nations section, BCTS replacement requirements vary depending on the First Nation(s) perspective on TAP deferrals.
- The Ministry Field Verification Technical Guidance related to replacement should be followed with the exception that, for BCTS operations, the driver for identification of ecologically suitable replacement area should be “like for like” rather than THLB or non THLB. The intent is to identify the best replacement area that is available including older mature stands if old growth is not available.
- Size thresholds described in the Slivers section will be applied to replacements.
- Reasonable effort to locate suitable replacement area for TAP encroachments at the TSL level is expected. Where old growth replacement is not available, older mature stands should be utilized. If suitable replacement area cannot be identified, the associated TSL may proceed with appropriate due diligence documentation.

Field Verification Submissions to Districts

- Guidance in this section is subject to limitations in the First Nations section above.
- BCTS harvest encroachments into TAP polygons and associated replacement areas are to be submitted to Districts consistent with current Ministry requirements.
- Business Areas should continue to make timely submissions to Districts, however this process should in no way impede the progress of the associated TSL or permit. Districts may choose to review BCTS submissions however the Timber Sales Manager is ultimately responsible to ensure that BCTS operations are consistent with government policy related to old growth deferrals.