

CHIEF FORESTER EXPECTATIONS

January 2023



For Improving Residual Fibre Utilization in order to Reduce Emissions from Slash Pile Burning While Carrying Out Government Funded Silviculture Activities

The Chief Forester expects that Ministry of Forests staff and contractors working on projects funded by the government (For example; Forest Investment Program, Land base Investments, Forest Enhancement Society of BC) will seek every opportunity to improve residual fibre utilization in order to reduce emissions from slash pile burning associated with their forest activities.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT: *The following document from the Ministry of Forests (the Ministry) provides the Chief Forester’s expectations of forest professionals who plan and implement silviculture projects in British Columbia. This document does not replace or preclude legal requirements or other sources of guidance that are issued by the Ministry **including the obligation to assess and mitigate fire risk.***

Introduction

Emissions from slash pile burning in British Columbia contribute to approximately 6% (of annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the province [Provincial greenhouse gas emissions inventory - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#) In the CleanBC Roadmap to 2030, the Province has committed to working toward near elimination of slash pile burning by 2030 and will divert materials away from slash piles and toward bioproduct development. This will reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, while creating new opportunities in British Columbia’s green economy.

To help demonstrate best practices, government funded silviculture programs should, where practicable, find ways to recover and divert residual biomass from forest activities towards bioproduct development to reduce emissions that would otherwise be produced through the burning of woody debris in slash piles.

Utilization of woody debris associated with government funded silviculture activities will provide opportunities to establish business connections, promote new markets for forest residuals, and support existing pulp, paper, pellet, bioenergy, and other manufacturing in the new bioeconomy.

Seeking to maximize the recovery and use of fibre while reducing emissions will help change forest management in the province from a volume-based one to an approach that seeks to maximize the value from forest harvesting, while managing for multiple values.

For government funded programs and associated projects, the opportunity to reduce emissions while planting more trees, creating high paying jobs in rural communities, and mitigating wildfire risk supports key government objectives including creating a bioeconomy, fighting climate change, and making forests more resilient.

Expected Considerations and Steps to Reduce Emissions Associated with Government Funded Silviculture Activities

Reducing the volume of residual biomass created by projects begins at the initial planning stage with identifying projects that lend themselves to better fibre utilization. Assessing markets and making connections with businesses associated with secondary manufacturing of residual fibre will be important steps to be taken at a local level.



Chipping facility located on the North end of Vancouver Island.



Planning to reduce emissions through utilization of woody debris from a wildfire risk reduction project.

Some Steps to Assess Opportunities to Avoid Emissions:

1. Initial planning- consult and consider local Forest Landscape Plans, licensees, fibre markets, fire risk maps, fire management plans, and forest health assessments.
2. Site assessments- safety of operations, value of stand, proximity to markets and communities, wildfire risk, accessibility by road and overall risk of increasing emissions associated with the project.

3. Possible options:

- For reforestation projects of stands with a dead overstory, consider underplanting or plant as is therefore no trees will be knocked down ([FCI reforestation](#)).
- For overstory removal, consider use of Innovative Timber Sale Licenses through BC Timber Sales, or a Forest License to Cut to remove overstory and include utilization of residuals as part of license. For projects where trees will be cut or knocked down, bring fibre to the roadside and seek opportunities to utilize all piles for pulp, pellets, bioenergy or other value add products (https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/forestry/timber-tenures/forest-fibre-action-plan/residue_handling_card.pdf).
- Assess wildfire risk and if it is deemed low then consider leaving piles oriented in such a way that promotes use by small mammals ([Wildlife Tree & Course Woody Debris Guidance & Policies - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)).

4. Report on slash pile burning or utilization when project is entered into RESULTS (Slash pile burning is reported into RESULTS. Base/Technique/Method code usage as SP/BU/PBURN).

5. The Chief Forester will report on year over year progress to reduce emissions in the Annual State of Forest Investments Report. Opportunities to improve our ability to reduce slash pile burning and avoid emissions will be considered for further policy development and to improve practices over time. Successful projects will be described and collected so opportunities to share best practices can be made known.

Not all government funded projects will reasonably be able to avoid all emissions, but steps taken to assess the possibilities of utilizing residual woody debris should be documented. The steps discussed above are not a comprehensive list or the only possible approach that exists around the province. Depending on the location and wildfire risk, other options to avoid emissions may exist and should be explored by project proponents.

Additional Guidance

[Forest Carbon Initiative - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

[module 5 utilization web.pdf \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

[module 3 reforestation web.pdf \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

[Residual Fibre Utilization Policy - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

[module 0 forest carbon introduction web.pdf \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

[Coarse Woody Debris \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

[\(Microsoft PowerPoint - Module 2 \226 Residual Harvesting Best Practices.pptx\) \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/forestry/timber-tenures/fibre-recovery/roadside_residue_handling_guidelines_version_3.pdf

www.fpinnovations.ca

[Fire & Fuel Management - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](http://www.gov.bc.ca) See

[CleanBC Roadmap to 2030 \(gov.bc.ca\)](http://www.gov.bc.ca)

[Over Story Removal for Innovative Timber Sale License \(ITSL\) - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](http://www.gov.bc.ca)

[modernizing_forestry_in_bc_report.pdf \(gov.bc.ca\)](http://www.gov.bc.ca)

Appendix

