



File: 16200-01

November 20, 2014

To: Forest Licensees and BC Timber Sales operating in Kalum, Nass & North Coast
TSAs, FLNRO Compliance and Enforcement Skeena Region

From: Coast Mountains Natural Resource District

Re: District Manager Policy - Utility Corridors Impacts to Visual Quality Polygons

Dear Forest Licensees,

This letter is to clarify the procedure for addressing non-forestry linear disturbances during visual impact assessments within the Coast Mountains Natural Resource District. Linear corridors such as power lines and pipelines are exempt from certain legal objectives intended for forestry operations and those proponents are not required to meet visual quality objectives (VQOs). When assessing visual quality objective polygons for forestry operations, linear utility corridors can have aesthetic impacts on landforms and in some cases exceed the range of percent alterations allowed for a given VQO. The intent of visual resource management however, is not to prevent forest harvesting due to the visual effect of linear corridors.

Transmission lines and other such linear features can be viewed as permanent with lasting visual impacts where vegetation is managed by removal and will be excluded from the forested portion of the landscape and from green/non-green calculations.

This approach for evaluating utility corridors does not render the legally established VQO irrelevant and forest licensees must still utilize visual landscape management principles to meet it. Similarly this approach for evaluating utility corridors should not be used as a rationale for not meeting objectives or as part of 'practicable' clauses in a Forest Stewardship Plan amendment to justify harvesting beyond the VQO limits.

Within the district, Forest and Range Evaluation Program effectiveness evaluations and Compliance and Enforcement VQO inspections will be consistent by excluding utility corridors from percent alteration calculations. For the current Timber Supply Review for North Coast Timber Supply Area, utility corridors will be removed from the forested land base and the Timber Harvest Land Base.

Signed,

Barry Dobbin, RPF
District Manager