



June 11, 2012

## OVERVIEW: Land Use Plans

### *History and context of Land Use Planning*

Land use planning in British Columbia accelerated in the early 1990s as a tool to resolve land use conflicts, primarily between major forest tenure holders and tenure holders in other industries, as well as other interests (e.g. environmental groups). Before this time, plans were done on a valley-by-valley basis, with less emphasis on assessing broad social, economic and environmental trends.

Land use planning in B.C. has the following goals:

- improve land use certainty and economic stability;
- generate economic opportunities, investment and jobs;
- achieve healthy communities and ensure the long-term viability of the environment.

Land use plans and agreements are used by the public sector, private sector, First Nations and other resource managers to direct or guide land and resource management decisions. The geographic areas that are covered by plans or agreements can be large regions, sub-regions, watersheds, landscape units or coastal marine areas

Land use plans cover more than 90% of the provincial land base, and include four **regional plans**; 23 subregional **Land and Resource Management Plans**<sup>1</sup> (LRMPs), and over 100 watershed-scale **Sustainable Resource Management Plans** (SRMPs).

The *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA) and the *Land Act* establish a legal framework for plan implementation.

Generally, regional and subregional plans provide:

- a description of a **vision and approach** for achieving sustainable land and natural resource management on Crown land in British Columbia;
- an expression of **goals and objectives** for using and managing Crown land and resources in a given geographic area (or zone);
- broad, strategic direction and priorities in contrast to operational land and resource management plans, which define specific methods for achieving the direction.

Sustainable Resource Management Plans typically focus on watershed-sized areas. Planning activities often include identifying biodiversity conservation zones and objectives (e.g. old-growth management areas, riparian areas, wildlife management areas) to aid in implementation of the *Forest and Range Practices Act*. In other cases, they provide direction for economic development, and for resource use by

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<sup>1</sup> **Regional plans include:** Vancouver Island; Cariboo-Chilcotin; East Kootenay; West Kootenay Boundary

**LRMPs include:** Kispiox, Kamloops, Vanderhoof, Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Robson Valley, Prince George, Lakes, Bulkley Valley, Fort St. James, Cassiar-Iskut Stikine, Dawson Creek, Mackenzie, Okanagan-Shuswap, Kalum, Lillooet, Morice, North Coast, Central Coast, Sea-to-Sky, Atlin-Taku, Cranberry-Nass South, Haida Gwaii.

sectors such as tourism, recreation or agriculture. Sustainable Resource Management Plans (including landscape unit plans) bridge the gap between regional and subregional land use plans and operational plans.

### ***Major Accomplishments of Land Use Planning***

**1. Resolution of land and resource conflicts:**

Addressing existing social conflicts over land and resource use and management minimizes the potential for future conflicts.

**2. Agreement on suitable land and resource use:**

Land and resource use decisions are based on sound scientific and social information about the significance of land and resource values; the biophysical capability of land and resources; human demand for accessing resources; and impacts of alternative land and resource uses.

**3. Provided investment certainty:**

Providing clarity and agreement on appropriate land and resource objectives and uses helps with investment and approval decision making, and supports communities.

**4. Delivery of protected areas:**

Regional plans and Land and Resource Management Plans were instrumental in negotiating agreement around delivery of the government's expanded protected areas system.

**5. Costs savings for government:**

An enormous amount of public participation over several years for each land use plan reduced planning costs for government.

**6. Stakeholder and public consensus agreements:**

The land use plans were largely consensus agreements, with outstanding issues being resolved by Cabinet.

**7. Enabled First Nations engagement (later LRMPs):**

- Provided a forum for First Nations interests and information regarding land and resource use and management to be considered and accommodated.
- Built trust and understanding among government, First Nations and other groups, to further a New Relationship with First Nations.
- Achieved government-to-government agreements on specific land use direction and implementation actions.

### ***Weaknesses of Land Use Planning***

**1. Lack of First Nations involvement in earlier LRMPs:**

In contrast to later plans (e.g. Haida Gwaii, North and Central Coast), earlier Land and Resource Management Plans had little First Nations involvement, so they provided little direction for achieving First Nations economic and cultural interests, and little basis for Government-to-Government (G2G) agreements.

**2. Lack of consistent monitoring, review and amendment of plans:**

Due to resourcing issues, land use plans may need updating due to natural disturbance to the land base (e.g. mountain pine beetle), changes to human use emphasis (e.g. clean energy), and new and emerging legislation (e.g. *Species at Risk Act*; new water legislation).

**3. Lack of legal enforcement where plans are policy only:**

The complexities of forestry legislation have made implementation challenging where plans are not required by law. Where plans have legal status, this usually does not apply to non-forest resource sectors resulting in issues of fairness between sectors regarding the use of Crown land and resources.

#### 4. Administrative challenges:

Where components of a land use plan have legal status, a complexity of issues arise as new policies and initiatives (e.g. First Nations agreements, treaty considerations, Mountain Caribou Implementation Plan, tourism plans, clean energy projects, etc.), compete with the ability to implement legal orders.

#### *Timelines for Land Use Plans across the Mountain Pine Beetle-Impacted Area*

Most Land and Resource Management Plans included provisions for review after five years by implementation and monitoring (I/M) committees. While formal reviews have mostly not been carried out, ongoing establishment of, and amendments to, legal orders reflect current policy.

Region	LRMP*	Legal Order**	Effective Date of Legal Order	Review
<b>Skeena</b>				
	Lakes District LRMP	Yes: Lakes South SRMP Lake North SRMP	Sept 1, 2003; amended May 4, 2007 Jan 29, 2009	No active I/M committees
	Morice LRMP	No: Draft Order for Biodiversity Objectives in prep	[LRMP - July 1, 2007]	No active I/M Committee
<b>Omineca</b>	Prince George LRMP	Yes: PG TSA Biodiversity Objectives Order	Jan 1, 1999 Oct 20, 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of meetings to assess mountain pine beetle impacts on the plan in 2005</li> <li>• Last meeting Jan 2007</li> </ul>
	Fort St James LRMP	Yes: falls under PG TSA Order plus Scenic Areas	Mar 30, 1999 Oct 20, 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No active I/M committee</li> <li>• Last meeting Feb 2006</li> </ul>
	Mackenzie LRMP	Yes: aspatial and spatial biodiversity objectives	Oct 7, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No active I/M committee</li> <li>• Last meeting Nov 2007</li> </ul>
	Robson Valley LRMP	Yes: aspatial and spatial biodiversity objectives	2003, 05, 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No active I/M committee</li> <li>• Last meeting Mar 2008</li> </ul>
	Vanderhoof LRMP	Yes: falls under PG TSA Biodiversity Order	Jan 1, 1997 Oct 20, 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No active I/M committee (committee last met in April 2006)</li> <li>• Substantial work by govt staff to amend the Access Management Plan in 2006-2007 and assess beetle impacts.</li> </ul>
<b>Thompson-Okanagan</b>	Kamloops LRMP	Yes	July 1, 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No active I/M committee</li> <li>• No review / update</li> </ul>
<p>* Many SRMPs are nested within LRMP areas. The Cariboo-Chilcotin Land Use Plan is addressed in a separate note.  ** More information is provided in a separate note.</p>				