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October 3, 2016

Via email

To All Licensees and Forest Professionals Operating in the Okanagan Shuswap Natural Resource District:

Re: District Manager Letter of Expectation Regarding Forest Stewardship Plans

I am seeing some good results with respect to collaboration with First Nations, range tenure holders and residents who live in and near the working forest. This District Manager Letter of Expectation regarding Forest Stewardship Plans (FSP) is intended to build upon those collaborative efforts and provide some local Okanagan Shuswap Natural Resource District (DOS) content. It builds on, and is in addition to, the March 2016 Chief Forester Guidance. As the delegated decision maker, I set these expectations in consideration of the unique operational circumstances of the Okanagan Shuswap Natural Resource District and the increasing impact of forest health factors, fire, climate change, drought and the cumulative effects of multiple natural resource sector operations on the timber harvesting land base.

The following expectations constitute my guidance for the development of your FSP.

Okanagan Shuswap District Expectations

I expect that the following policies be considered as best practices:

- District Forage Supply strategy and the Memorandum of Agreement on grass seeding
file:///acheron.dmz/public.web/DOS/Dist_docs/Docs/Forage%20Strategy%202011%20Sept.pdf
- Riparian debris protection
file:///acheron.dmz/public.web/DOS/programs/range/range_index.htm
- *Stump and Large Root Removal to Control Root Disease (Resource Practices Branch, September 2015)*
https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/HFP/external/!publish/Forest_Health/Root%20Diseases/

Climate Change

I expect Climate Change adaptation and mitigation strategies to be considered in your FSP. The documents *Adapting Natural Resource Management to a Changing Climate in the Thompson Okanagan Region: Considerations for Practitioners and Government Staff, FLNRO Climate*

Change Adaption and the “Climate Action Plan: Thompson Okanagan Region 2016 – 2020 should be considered.

Collaborative Planning and Cumulative Effects

The combined effect of the activities of multiple licensees affects both aquatic and terrestrial values. Aquatic values are strongly influenced by factors of hydrology and geomorphology. Current watershed assessment guidance, new hydrologic research and cumulative effects assessment and monitoring suggests that the watershed scale is best suited to consider the effects of both past and planned forestry activity. Terrestrial values associated with forest biodiversity are also strongly affected by the amount and pattern of forest seral stages over the broader landscape level.

Coordinated planning amongst forest professionals is required to achieve positive outcomes for these values. I expect that licensees sharing one or more watersheds will provide consolidated mapping that is available to FN, stakeholders and the public.

Dry Belt Fir Ecosystems

I expect that timber harvesting will increasingly target dry belt fir ecosystems during the mid-term timber supply period. I expect that forest professionals engage with FLNRO regional specialists and DOS staff to review standards applicable to management of dry belt fir ecosystems, preferably before forest professionals commence development of replacement FSPs. Core elements of the dry belt fir standards will be applicable to plan content including, but not limited to: FSP requirements respecting stocking standards, cut block size/adjacency, visual resource management and stand level retention.

I expect that dry belt fir stands will be managed in a manner that will maintain the existing structures and tree species composition of stands. Dry belt fir management will maintain the representation of Douglas-fir across the region’s dry belt fir ecosystem. I expect forest professionals to enhance dry belt fir stands on the landscape for timber production, wildlife habitat, forest health, fire resiliency, forage production and range use. Silviculture systems and stocking standards for dry belt fir stands must be consistent with these expectations.

Forest Health

As noted in the Chief Forester Guidance, I expect that the DOS Forest Health Strategy be incorporated in the development of new FSP content.

Fuel Management and Fire Management Stocking Standards

The Okanagan TSA is dominated by fire prone ecosystems, with many values at risk. DOS is working in partnership with Wildfire Services Branch to develop a Fuel Management Plan for the district. The plan will incorporate measures and actions to reduce fuels in the Crown land/rural interface and create landscape level barriers and strategic fire suppression control points in mid to upper elevation areas. I will be seeking industry cooperation in assisting the district and Wildfire Services Branch in achieving these objectives.

I expect that licensees will conduct harvesting operations within the two kilometre interface zone around communities to balance all values unique to these areas, including fuel reduction and scenic considerations.

Our Ministry has recently released *Guidance on Fire Management Stocking Standards*. I expect that forest professionals will consider this guidance for their FSPs as well as increase their awareness of fuel loading and fuel management. The most current district fire management plans, as well as local community wildfire plans should be consulted and addressed where appropriate.

Invasive Plants

I expect forest professionals to increase their awareness, address their responsibility to prevent the spread of invasive plants and provide more robust Measures. *Best Practices for Preventing the Spread of Invasive Plants During Forest Management Activities* is considered best available information. Key to preventing expansion of invasive plants is training of operators and staff, preventative practices, monitoring and treatments where necessary.

http://bcinvasives.ca/documents/Forestry_BMP_Final_WEB_04_22_2015.pdf

Results of Natural Resource Monitoring

I expect that forest professionals will continue to improve their management of the FRPA values and use tools such as Forest and Range Evaluation Program (FREP) and Multiple Resource Value Assessments (MRVA) to learn and improve on practices.

Reviewing Criteria

District staff will be using the methodology from the Forest Practices Board report *Forest Stewardship Plans: Are They Meeting Expectations?* to determine that Results, Strategies and Measures are both measurable and verifiable.

Roads and Access Management

Access resulting from forest development can lead to unintended cumulative impacts. I expect that forest professionals will consider mitigating these impacts through such things as increased coordination, planning and implementation of access management with other forest licensees and non-licensees access users where appropriate.

Stocking Standards

I expect that forest professionals consider the *Updates to the Reference Guide for FDP Stocking Standards (2014)*. I expect that professionals remain up to date with stocking standard changes and guidance as it becomes available.

Water Sustainability Act

The *Water Sustainability Act* and regulations were enacted February 29, 2016 and I expect that forest professionals familiarize themselves with this new act and ensure consistency within their FSP and operations.

Watershed Management

I expect that forest professionals recognize the importance of managing cumulative watershed effects to maintain water quality, quantity, timing of flows, stream channel dynamics, aquatic ecosystem integrity, fish and fish habitat that exist in all watersheds. I expect that forest professionals consider new hydrologic science and assessment guidance when considering the combined effects of forestry activities, other land uses and other land users, within a watershed. I further expect current, consolidated and complete watershed assessments in consideration of recommended thresholds for equivalent clear cut areas.

I look forward to the continued success of the relationships you have established with FLNRO staff, the public, First Nations and stakeholders within the Okanagan Shuswap Natural Resource District and continuing to work with you on the many shared initiatives within the district boundaries. My staff is available to assist you on the important work you are doing in preparing new Forest Stewardship Plans.

Yours truly,

Ray Crampton
District Manager
Okanagan Shuswap Natural Resource District