



File: 18045-02

June 30, 2016

BY EMAIL

To All Licensees

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to Licensees and BC Timber Sales regarding Forest Stewardship Plans (FSPs) in the Sea to Sky Natural Resource District, as a follow-up to the Minister's letter, the Chief Forester's provincial guidance letter, the Forest Practices Board's report¹, and the FSP training in April, regarding my expectations on FSP replacements.

The district manager's FSP expectations are not legally binding and constitute policy guidance under FRPA's non-legal realm. As such, the information contained in this letter is intended to provide practitioners further clarity around the principles and process that will be used to decide whether a proposed FSP meets the legal tests in the *Forest and Range Practices Act* (FRPA) and the *Forest Planning and Practices Regulation* (FPPR) (e.g. consistent with government objectives). Over the past decade, there have been substantive changes to the land base, operating environment, best available information, stakeholder interests and public expectation regarding forest stewardship and planning. These changes warrant FSP replacements rather than extensions.

By submitting a replacement FSP, the legal requirement for public consultation is triggered which enables communities, stakeholders, the general public and other affected parties to have a formal opportunity to review and present their perspectives and input on the plan. In special circumstances, however, it may be necessary to request a short term extension without public review if supported by a rationale.

The Association of British Columbia Forest Professionals' (ABC FP) guidance recommends that professionally-prepared documentation in support of proposed FSPs include rationales stating how relevant information (e.g., district manager expectations, best available information, non-legal guidance) has been considered in the preparation of FSPs. In

¹ FPB/SIR/44, "Forest Stewardship Plans: Are They Meeting Expectations?", August 2015:
<https://www.bcfpb.ca/sites/default/files/reports/SIR44-FSP-Are-They-Meeting-Expectations.pdf>

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reviewing proposed FSPs, there may be a need to request information from a licensee such as assessments, designs or rationales to support my review of the FSP content against legal approval tests.

Within the context of the above comments, my expectations are categorized into three subheadings: “Opportunities for Improvement”; “New Information to Consider”; and “Next Steps” in the process leading up to FSP submissions.

Opportunities for improvement:

Although there are many examples of licensees demonstrating diligence and being proactive in engaging and addressing public, stakeholder, and First Nation concerns and interests, there remains room for improvement to build from these efforts and learn from the past, given the changing environment across the land base.

Some of the changing interests include but are not limited to, people’s desire for greater input on proposed forest development; increased environmental concerns; cumulative effects of increasing natural resource activity; water quality, or increasing requirements for species at risk.

Given the above, licensees need to factor in the following:

- *Results, strategies, and measures, and general refinements* – ensure the FSP commitments are consistent with Government objectives; results and strategies are measureable and verifiable; and commitments are clearly written and supported.
- *Stocking standards* – climate change, drought conditions, forest health issues, fire management concerns, and significant wildlife impacts may trigger the need for revised or new stocking standards.
- *Collaborative planning* – forest licence holders should explore a more collaborated and coordinated forest stewardship planning approach to address cumulative hydrological effects, manage strategic cultural values (e.g. cultural landscape feature, sanctuary, etc.), invasive plant management, wildlife habitat management and enhance stocking standards.
- *Social licence* – there are options to improve engagement with interested or affected parties during the review and lifetime of FSPs to minimize and address potential specific and landscape level concerns. There are new options with technology to share and capture development planning to help the public and stakeholders understand proposed activities and solicit timely feedback, especially at the early engagement and post-harvest stage. Development planning should consider how harvesting is integrated into recreation values and various other stakeholder’s rights on the landbase. Early engagement is one tool to help achieve this.
- *Public safety* – Recreational activity and public use of roads is increasing in the district. Licensees should consider the impact of their operations on access and public

safety both during and after harvest activities as well as any longer term resource management risks (e.g. terrain stability).

New information to consider:

There is a significant amount of new information available which should be considered in preparing FSPs. Although not an exhaustive list, key information and guidance at a provincial, regional, and local level is cited below for your consideration in preparing FSPs.

#	Direction, guidance, information	Examples
1	Government objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Act and FRPA orders and notices
2	Chief Forester standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Forester standards for seed use • Climate-based seed transfer interim policy measures
3	Non-legal guidance – Provincial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape fire management planning • Climate change stocking standards • Fire management stocking standards • Forest health and species selection • Provincial Timber Mgmt Goals and Objectives
4	Non-legal guidance – Regional and local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timber supply analyses and AAC determinations • TSA forest health strategies • Regional climate action plans • Chilliwack District FSP data and information sources • Strategic First Nation Cultural Information • Invasive Plant Measures: Considerations for Plan Preparers and Approvers • Appendix A - FRPA Regulation Species Recommended for FSP Inclusion by Former Coastal Forest District & BEC Zone • Sea to Sky LRMP • Land Use Planning Agreement with the Lil'wat Nation • Land Use Planning Agreement with the Squamish Nation • Land Use Planning Agreement with the In-SHUCK-ch Nation
5	Monitoring trends and guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest and Range Evaluation Program (FREP) • Multi resource value assessments (MRVAs) • Forest Health Aerial Survey Summary Reports
6	Best available information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional extension notes: adapting to climate change

#	Direction, guidance, information	Examples
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research (e.g., hydrology, wildlife, riparian, timber, forest health, natural disturbance, invasive species) • Critical Habitat for Species at Risk (see federal Recovery Planning documents)² • Provincial³ or Federal⁴ Recovery Planning documents • Drought risk assessment tool • Cumulative Effects Framework • Water Sustainability Act

In relation to the above items, take into consideration the following:

Item 4 – non legal guidance – regional and local

- *Timber Supply Review (TSR)* - consideration of TSRIII harvest assumptions such as minimum harvest age and harvest species profile and sequencing.
- *Forest health* – forest health factors such as hemlock dwarf mistletoe and *Phellinus* and *Armillaria* root diseases continue to impact productivity and mortality of managed forest stands in the Soo TSA and should be considered in the development of stocking standards.
- *First Nations* – consideration for strategic First Nations cultural information is important in the planning process.
- *Invasive Plants* - measures to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species should be measurable and verifiable, as well as effective and practicable. They should include measures for detecting, reporting and monitoring infestations. Re-vegetation measures need to specify the timing of seeding and specify an appropriate grass seed mix that limits the introduction of weed seed. Where invasive species are present, licensees must include measures to prevent the spread of those species by their forest practices. Guidance document updated June, 2016.

Item 5 – Monitoring trends and guidance

- *FREP/MRVA* – consideration of the key findings and District Managers’ expectations from the 2013 MRVA report, as they relate to stream function, water quality, biodiversity and visual quality. These include: consideration of tree retention around small streams in particular those connected to fish streams or drinking water sources, avoiding the introduction of woody debris to small

² At least one federal Recovery Strategy is approved in parts of the Sea to Sky Natural Resource District (e.g. Pacific Water Shrew). Information in April 2016 from Environment Canada indicates 56 other Recovery Strategies are expected to be approved in BC over the next three years. This does not include Marbled Murrelet or Northern Goshawk *laingi*, for which the province is developing implementation plans.

³ <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/recoveryplans/rcvry1.htm>

⁴ <http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=24F7211B-1>

streams that could create stream blockages following harvesting, and minimizing soil disturbance and fine sediment delivery near streams and drainage structures that connect to streams through the application of best practices in road design, maintenance and deactivation.

Item 6 – Best available information

- *Wildlife* – results and strategies are not required for wildlife species that have Orders that fulfill the FPPR Section 7 or *Woodlot Licence Planning and Practices Regulation* (WLPPR) Section 9 Wildlife Notices. For the Soo TSA, this includes grizzly bear, pacific tailed frog, spotted owl, marbled murrelet, black-tailed deer and moose. However, results or strategies are required for Pacific water shrew⁵.
- *Other species and recovery plans* - available on the Federal Species at Risk Public Registry and Provincial web sites as noted above. (e.g. Marbled Murrelet, Northern Goshawk *laingi* subspecies, Pacific water shrew etc.). It is important for professionals to consider all aspects of the FSP and associated forest development planning that may influence habitat for other species not listed in FPPR Section 7 or WLPPR Section 9 Wildlife Notices.
- *Forest Planning and Practices Regulations* (FPPR) *Sections 21 and 22* - public comments must be considered, and the actions taken to address them must be included as part of the FSP submission to the District Manager. To expedite the FSP review process, the review and comment summary package should be submitted in a consistent format. The district has a communication summary template that is available, upon request.
- *Stakeholders/persons with rights who may be affected by the proposed FSP* – these groups must have an opportunity to review and comment on the plan. Stakeholders that are important may include other forest licensees, land and water rights holders, guide outfitters, commercial and non-commercial recreation groups, trappers, adjacent private land holders and community/rate payer groups. Where a specific forest stewardship related concern does not fit within a result or strategy framework, the response to the above referenced stakeholder’s concern or interest will be important in assessing the effectiveness and completeness of stakeholder engagement. The district has some stakeholder contact information which is available upon request.

This information may not form part of the legal commitments of the FSP, but may accompany the FSP submission as supporting information or be available upon request at the FSP review process.

Next steps:

Along with this expectation letter, the planning process should include an opportunity to have information sharing meetings with licensee(s) to further discuss the district manager’s

⁵ Expected to be fulfilled once a currently proposed Order is approved.

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expectations. A licensee or forest professional initiated meeting to develop a common understanding of areas of focus for a replacement FSP will be beneficial in supporting a streamlined and informed process. If licensees would like to coordinate the development of common FSP approaches, the district is willing to support and facilitate this desire. Additional topics can include the licensee's perspective on these expectations, licensee's plans and timelines, and the district's process for reviewing FSPs. The district will make available any district review checklists or stakeholders information that may be helpful to those preparing FSPs.

I trust that a high degree of effort and communication will continue to occur when FSP replacements are developed. If you have any questions on the above, please contact Joanne DeGagne at 604-898-2116 or Joanne.DeGagne@gov.bc.ca.

Yours truly,

Scott Shaw-MacLaren, RPF
Acting District Manager
Sea to Sky Natural Resource District