

Ribbonless Boundaries for Wildfire Timber Salvage Operations (in the Interior only)

January 2026 - January 2030

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On November 22, 2023, the Deputy Minister approved the implementation of a guideline to provide an option to use ribbonless boundaries for wildfire timber salvage operations. Consistent process for submissions will help to support the 2025/2026 Regional Operations Performance Measure for cutting permit (CP) issuance within twenty-five business days. This document will serve as the provincial guidance, and it is intended to be updated annually to incorporate new learnings and changes in legislation and/or policy.

Purpose:

To provide consistent and safe guidance for wildfire timber salvage cutting permit (CP) boundary preparation that allows for accelerated harvest and reforestation initiatives within tenured areas. *Forest Act* agreement holders¹ in collaboration with First Nations may consider using the ribbonless boundary tool (RBT) in conjunction with comparative cruising. Collaboration with First Nations is critical to any permitting process and even more so when reducing the permitting process timelines in wildfire timber salvage projects.

Requirements

- Ribbonless boundary is defined as a cutblock boundary that is not identified in the field and exists on geo-referenced maps loaded onto handheld and navigational devices. Note that there is less work required by the agreement holder to prepare on the front-end of the permit and more on the back end, after harvesting the site, to meet the required CP obligations.
- If cutblocks are engineered from the office, due to field crew safety concerns, target moderate to high burn severity areas using all three of these tools: Lidar, high resolution imagery² and provincial burn severity mapping by Forest Analysis and

¹ *Forest Act* agreement holders are those agreements listed in *Forest Act* section 12.

² High resolution imagery is at minimum: satellite (sub-meter) or drone (high-quality, 15cm resolution and sub-meter accuracy, orthographic imagery with georeferenced error less than 5 meters).

Inventory Branch (FAIB). Must provide rationale with the CP submission if all three tools are not used.

- Consider post-harvest commitments that may include the requirement to reconcile the harvest area (by providing a georeferenced map) through a changed circumstance re-appraisal, per Section 2.2.2 of the Interior Appraisal Manual (IAM).
- Use this process (see [Appendix B](#)) on post wildfire sites within two years.

Applicability

The RBT can be considered for cutblocks:

1. Where more than 40 percent of the timber is burnt and within a wildfire perimeter (time sensitive concerns);
2. where there is an approved comparative cruise used (time sensitive concerns);
3. on moderate to high burn severity sites; and
4. where forest tenure holders are aligned with land base objectives and have support from First Nations for wildfire timber salvage.

When all the above parameters are met, the following expectations are to be reviewed.

General Expectations:

- The ribbonless boundary tool will be considered on a wildfire-by-wildfire and permit-by-permit basis [*Forest Act*, Section 52.03 (2)] and requires a professional rationale to consider revenue risk, efficiency and safety goals.
 - The RBT will only be used in areas where an available and approved (by the Minister³) comparative cruise is used.
- Agreements between overlapping forest tenure holders within the wildfire perimeter must be in place for coordination and to minimize development/operational overlap (as per [Wildfire Timber Salvage Planning and Administration Guidance Feb 2025](#)).
- The harvesting contractor(s) must have GPS capability in their machines. Operators must be able to show their location, on a geo-referenced map, upon inspection.
- All legislation, regulation, policy, forest tenure agreement, forest stewardship plan, CP and road permit (RP) requirements apply.
- Harvest planning must minimize future timber isolation.
- Maintain retention and creation of internal reserve areas, wildlife tree retention areas (WTRAs) where appropriate and suitable in fire salvage areas ([Post Natural Disturbance Forest Restoration Guidance](#)).
- Exclude large areas not available for harvest, as identified in the “Wildfire Timber Salvage Strategy” (e.g., retention areas, unburned trees, inoperable areas) from the harvest area.
- Complete GPS (see [specifications](#)) or high-resolution imagery² boundary reconciliation post-harvest (for more information, contact Forest Inventory Manager, FAIB).

³ Approval by Minister and delegated to the Regional Executive Director.

CP Development:

- Consideration of values on the land base are still applicable to CP development (e.g., archaeological assessment requirements, cultural heritage resource assessments, riparian values).
- While working in the field, ensure safety hazards are addressed or mitigated as per WorkSafe requirements.
- Complete ground truthing and ribboning to locate RP access roads, prior to construction; ensure protection of riparian features, WTRAs, and sensitive sites; and to prevent incursions of harvest/salvage areas into adjacent areas (that require legal survey as per Forest Planning and Practices Regulation (FPPR), Sections 4.17 and 4.56) e.g., parks, protected areas or conservancies, treaty lands, area-based tenures or private land.
- When ribbonless boundary cutblocks are adjacent to one another, ensure the shared external boundary is delineated by a line of stubbed trees.
- Comparative cruising package must be consistent with [Interior Comparative Cruise Policy - August 2024](#).

CP Submission:

- Standard CP application submission procedures and requirements still apply, including the requirements of *Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA)*, Section 15.1 (forest operations map), unless exempted by the district manager.
- CP applications must identify use of ribbonless boundary and comparative cruise tools and provide a rationale statement.
- CP applications must document transparency with First Nations on the use of both tools in the CP development.
- Shorter CP terms of 1-2 years will be considered to encourage efficient and quick recovery and utilization of wildfire damaged timber.
- Standard mapping procedures and content apply. All features must be identified on the appraisal map (pre-harvest and post-harvest) and include access plans to all blocks.
- Harvesting cannot exceed the Exhibit A boundary without an approved amendment.

Re-appraisal:

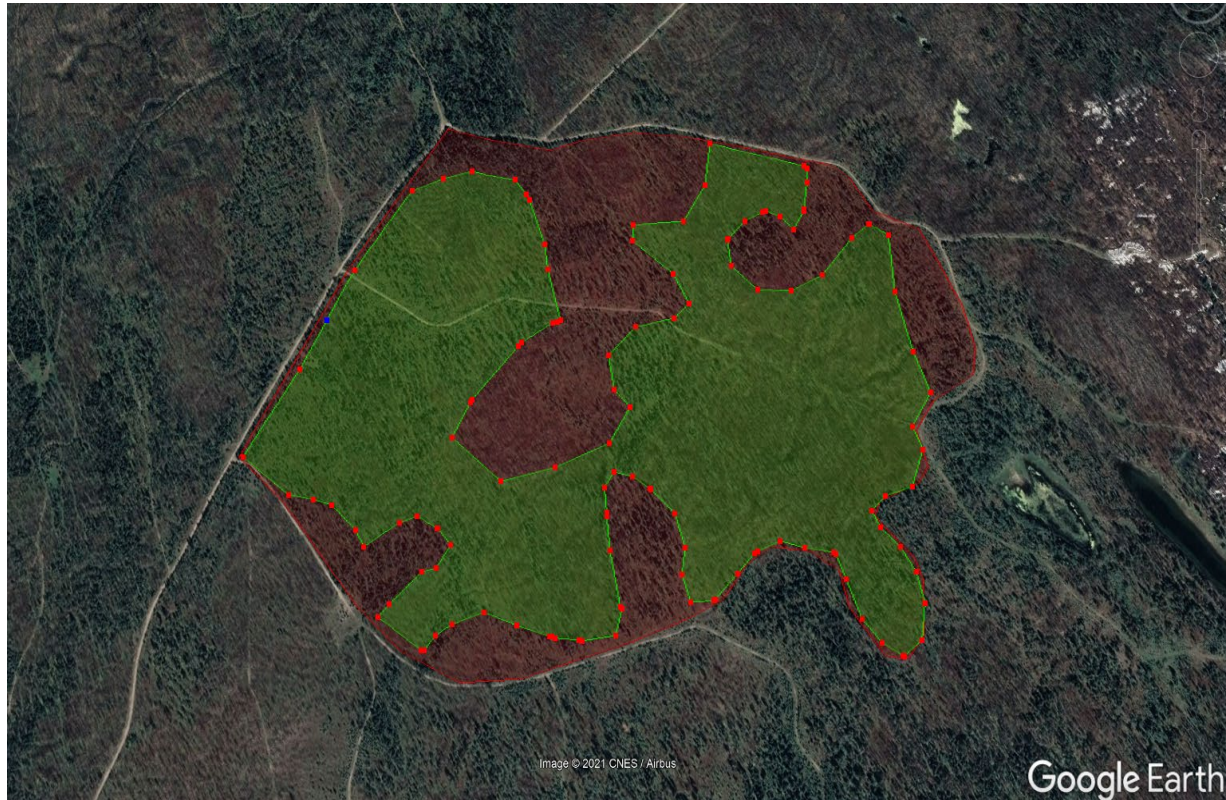
- CP amendment requests with final reconciled maps (see [Appendix A](#)) must be submitted to the district prior to CP expiry and prior to time of re-appraisal.
- Reconcile merchantable area, reserve trees and WTRAs post-harvest before waste assessment process and survey begins as per standard procedure in the [Provincial Logging Residue and Waste Measurements Procedure Manual](#).
- IAM requirements and timelines for CP post-harvest certification and reappraisal submission apply [IAM, Section 2.2.2 (3)].

Appendix A: Reconciled map

Red = Exhibit A boundary issued with CP

Green = Final harvested boundary (*reconciled boundary via CP amendment & re-appraisal*)

Figure 1 Ribbonless boundary reconciled map example.



Appendix B: Figure 2. Using Ribbonless Boundary Tool (RBT) for Wildfire Timber Salvage (Interior)

- blue = tenure holders
- purple = district staff
- green = appropriate decision maker

