



Vanderhoof LRMP

Integrated Land Management Bureau

Newsletter December 2007

Newsletter Update

The Vanderhoof Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) is a strategic land use plan developed by consensus, approved by Cabinet in 1997 and implemented since 1998. The LRMP provides strategic guidance for several values on approximately 1.3 million hectares of crown land. The LRMP outlines values that are important for consideration by government agencies, resource managers and general public in the plan area.

The Vanderhoof LRMP Update Project was initiated in 2005 to update and incorporate new information pertaining to the changing landscape in the Vanderhoof plan area due to the impact of the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic and accelerated salvaging operations.

The project will deliver an addendum to the current LRMP that incorporates the revised strategic guidance and is scheduled to be released in the spring of 2008.

We thank everyone who participated and provided valuable insight and information for this project as it enters into its final phase.



Since 2005, ILMB, partnering Ministries, stakeholders and interested public have been engaged in the **Vanderhoof LRMP update project** to examine and refine the strategic guidance to those values most at risk from the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic and subsequent management activities. The project was initiated under the mandate and direction of Objective 4 of the "**Provincial 2006-2011 Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan**" to "*Conserve the long-term forest values identified in land-use plans*".

The update to the Vanderhoof LRMP is *not a re-write* of the existing LRMP. The update initiative is a review to consider new information pertaining to the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic and operations.

The update primarily involves the review of all the General Management Directions (GMDs) for relevancy with new information to be used in implementation monitoring by stakeholders, government agencies and the general public. With the advice from LRMP update participants, government agencies produced technical information, completed necessary analyses and assessments, developed inventories and provided options for consideration.

All work was completed in an open and transparent process. All LRMP update meetings held were open to stakeholders and the general public. As a result, a wide variety of people representing a range of interests and values attended.

A formal "Stakeholder Analysis" was completed to address any gaps in representation. ILMB has sought and continues to seek input from First Nations with respect to the Vanderhoof LRMP update project.

In this newsletter:

- ✓ **Overview of the Vanderhoof LRMP Update project.**
- ✓ **Addressing high risk values (including Biodiversity, Recreation and Tourism, Wildlife and Access Management)**
- ✓ **Recommended Access Management Plan map**

The proposed outcome of this update project is to provide refined GMDs at a strategic level to help interpret the LRMP guidance for consideration in implementation priorities provided in the form of an addendum to the original Vanderhoof LRMP.

The update provides integrity, utility and continued support of the Vanderhoof LRMP by aligning it with current initiatives, legislation and scientific information to promote socio-economic opportunities and environmental certainty.

High Risk Values

Based on the process and results of the 2004/2005 Vanderhoof LRMP MPB risk assessment, 4 values were identified in the process as being at very 'high risk' with respect to the MPB epidemic and the current and future salvaging operations in the area:

ACCESS MANAGEMENT RECREATION & TOURISM WILDLIFE BIODIVERSITY

LRMP update participants determined that all the GMDs for these high risk values remain an important priority. Based on the current situation of the land base, each value in the LRMP was examined through asking three main questions:

- ⇒ *Is the strategic level guidance in the LRMP still important and relevant?*
- ⇒ *If so, where are these values located in the district?*
- ⇒ *What is required to provide certainty and consideration of these values in future resource management implementation?*

Advice from LRMP update participants concluded that the LRMP would be updated on two levels:

- **Strategic level:** *Re-affirm that the GMDs are still relevant and incorporate new information regarding the impacts from the MPB epidemic and operations at the strategic planning level.*
- **Technical level:** *Collect and produce technical information, inventories, mapping and assessments that facilitate and inform the implementation of the GMDs.*

Values updated at the strategic level required more public involvement while the technical updating of such values as biodiversity would be completed by government agencies. This approach led to spending a significant amount of time and effort to engage LRMP update

participants, stakeholders, First Nations and public in the update process of the Access Management Plan in order to ensure it remains relevant and reflective of current patterns of use.

This newsletter provides a status report on the portion of the project primarily dealing with the update process of the high risk values.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT



The Vanderhoof Forest District has been implementing an Access Management Plan (AMP) under the guidance of the original LRMP since 1998. Due to the impacts of the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic, changes in legislation and the increase in road development to support accelerated salvaging operations, the AMP is being updated in order to better manage values on the changing land base. Given the inter-linkages with other values (i.e. Wildlife, Recreation and Tourism), the update for the AMP also serves to inform the updates for other closely linked values.

Essentially the GMD has remained the same with the addition of strategic direction relating to salvaging operations and refined boundaries (polygons) of the identified Access Management areas. The interests on the land base were reaffirmed through an extensive public review and comment process that included several meetings and two public open houses to receive important feedback regarding current patterns of use in the Access Management planning areas. The review indicated a need to accommodate more motorized recreational activities (4X4, ATVs), certainty for a variety of recreation opportunities; management of access for wildlife values; and operational flexibility for the effective management of mountain pine beetle.

As a result of this recognition a new map to assist in the implementation of the GMD has been produced (see insert). The new map was produced by identifying recreation values and recreation opportunities on the landscape. The process included a combination of social knowledge/expertise (where and how do you play) and technical analysis (road density, recreation values inventory, agency input).

Key milestones in relation to this phase of the process include:

- ⇒ Access Management Plan survey (2005).
- ⇒ Vanderhoof Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (modified) analysis (2005).

The Access Management Plan survey was carried out to solicit public feedback and input regarding the current AMP in place and where recreation was occurring. This information provided the foundation for the AMP.

The Vanderhoof Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) analysis looks at the availability of choice for someone to participate in a preferred recreation activity within a preferred setting and enjoy the desired experience.

The purpose of the ROS Inventory is to:

- ⇒ identify, delineate, classify and record areas within the planning area into recreation opportunity classes based on their current state of remoteness, naturalness and expected social experience; and
- ⇒ provide information about existing recreation opportunities to land use planners and resource managers to assist them in making decisions on appropriate land uses and management prescriptions.
- ⇒ The modified ROS study was conducted under the update process for the Recreation and Tourism value but is implemented through the Access Management plan.

Both of these processes helped to implement the original goal of the AMP which is to provide a balanced range of recreational settings (i.e. backcountry wilderness) and experience (i.e. solitude & closeness to nature through hiking, horseback, bird watching, hunting or road accessible for ATV enjoyment) for public and commercial recreation needs.

The new recommended AMP map recommends the management of *road density*, which had not been addressed in the original AMP, that is, the management of the number of roads in an area. This includes some areas currently without roads to be managed to maintain this experience. This is done in tandem with clarifying accessible areas for motorized and non-motorized recreational use.

Areas on the revised AMP map will include four categories or objectives for access:

- ⇒ *Drive in* (high level of interaction with other people and motorized access)
- ⇒ *Semi remote* (backcountry moderate levels of interaction with others and motorized use)
- ⇒ *Remote* (low levels of interaction with others and non motorized use)
- ⇒ *Functionally Non- roaded areas* (Wilderness, extremely low levels of interaction with others and non motorized use).

This recommended AMP does not prevent tenure holders from carrying out their licensed business (i.e. logging, trapping, ranching, and mining). All forest harvesting and other resource extraction can and will continue to occur. The responsibility of tenure holders is to use this recommended plan to maintain the recreation opportunity identified.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this GMD or the attached recommended map for implementation use, you may refer to the contact information provided on the concluding page.

RECREATION & TOURISM

The GMD for this value remains relevant and therefore was not changed. The original objectives of the GMD were aligned with the initiatives and operations scoped out during the updating process to address economic diversification needs in the GMD for the Jobs and Community Stability value.

One of the areas of focus was on the need for increased certainty regarding scenic areas and the implementation of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum through the forthcoming recommended Access Management plan.

The update to the recreation and tourism value primarily involved managing for important scenic areas and addressing changes to the visual landscape caused by the pine beetle epidemic.

The first step in addressing these changes was the completion of a Visual Landscape Inventory (VLI) in some key scenic areas. The purpose of the VLI is to provide information about the visual condition, characteristics and sensitivity to alteration that occur for various reasons, for this update, it was carried out due to concerns that continued salvaging of MPB may impact scenic areas. The updated VLI will include detailed mapping of the view sheds to indicate what can

visually be expected in the area. This inventory is one way to ensure better certainty for land use needs for recreation and tourism.

While no new scenic areas have been identified in the Vanderhoof LRMP area, existing boundaries have been adjusted and refined to better capture the visually sensitive areas in the view shed. Existing scenic areas are recommended to include additional polygons to include: Tatelkuz, Finger Lake and Chedakus area.

The level of management for these scenic areas is defined by Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs). VQOs have been implemented in Vanderhoof for the past ten years and are important in implementing the objectives set out in the LRMP as licensees are required to prepare results and strategies that are consistent with the Visual Quality Objective (VQO).

The new information gathered and refined mapping of these locations helps provide certainty and consideration of this value during implementation of the GMD and MPB operations.

WILDLIFE

The primary goal for the wildlife management value outlined in the LRMP focuses on maintaining the diversity and abundance of wildlife species and habitat throughout the plan area. Specifically, the goal is to maintain adequate habitat for all naturally occurring species through appropriate management to cover requirements, access, forage productivity, movement opportunities and consideration of special features and inventories. LRMP participants were concerned with how MPB operations were affecting certain wildlife and wildlife habitat, (i.e. Moose) and what inventories were available or being completed.

In the winter of 2006, Omineca Region Ministry of Environment conducted a formal census for Moose Density for portions of the Prince George and Vanderhoof Forest District. The report is entitled 'Moose density and composition around Prince George' and was distributed to LRMP participants. This report is now available on the Vanderhoof LRMP website.

The Wildlife GMD remains the same. LRMP participants were given a map that essentially highlights 'areas of emphasis' for wildlife values that was derived directly from the LRMP document. The map serves as supplemental information that provides clarity to industry of where the wildlife values need consideration.

Discussions are continuing to take place with the Ministry of Environment on implementation of this GMD.

BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity is a critically important value also considered at high risk. LRMP participants were supportive of updating and evaluating this value through a highly technical process led by government agencies.

The collection of available information and data sources indicated there are areas of high biological value that should be considered in MPB management and future implementation activities.

It was determined that implementation of the GMD is occurring through various projects and processes (i.e. PG Timber Supply Area Biodiversity Order, MoE Retention Mapping) and that the strategic intent in the LRMP has not changed.

Looking Forward..

LRMP's continue to play an intricate and important role in the delivery of balanced decision making in integrated resource management. There is tremendous value and merit in maintaining the Vanderhoof LRMP as a recommended flexible policy document that is reflective of current conditions and legislative framework.

The review and assessment of the Vanderhoof LRMP was required to ensure that the LRMP remains relevant and reflective of the current situation on the land base with respect to the Mountain Pine Beetle.

The continued implementation of the updated Vanderhoof LRMP is a collaborative process based on professional reliance and voluntary compliance that will be monitored for demonstrated implementation over time.

The development of future implementation monitoring mechanisms is continuing to be explored.

ILMB would like to thank all LRMP participants, agencies and general public for their cooperation and participation on this project.

3 Quick Facts

- Vanderhoof LRMP was developed by full consensus, approved by Cabinet in 1997, implemented since 1998.
- The update initiative is a review to consider new information pertaining to the MPB epidemic and salvaging operations in the plan area.
- The project updates the LRMP on two levels:
 1. Strategic: Re-affirmed that the GMDs were still relevant and reflective of the current conditions on the land base.
 2. Technical: Produced technical information, inventories, and assessments, to be utilized during implementation.

Open LRMP meetings and workshops held for information gathering:

November 2004
February 2005
June 2005
November 2005
April 2006
October 2006 - Open House
November 2006- Open House

Several consultative discussion meetings were held in addition to LRMP meetings to address specific operational issues and concerns from various stakeholder groups, organized clubs and interested public.

For more information or questions contact:

Traci Leys-Schirok, Planning Officer
Regional Client Services Division
Integrated Land Management Bureau
Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
1488 4th Avenue 6th Floor
Prince George, BC V2L 4Y2
Tel: 250.565.6779 Fax: 250.565.6066
Email: Traci.Leysschirok@gov.bc.ca
ILMB online: <http://ilbm.gov.bc.ca/index.html>

UPDATED WEBSITE Now Available!

ILMB has been updating the website for the Vanderhoof LRMP to make it more user friendly and efficient for the exchange of information. The final draft of the LRMP Addendum will be posted upon release in early 2008 along with any other news and relevant links. All future and existing information, maps, data, reports and newsletters associated with the Vanderhoof LRMP and the update project will be available on this site.

Your feedback and comments are important to the implementation and monitoring of the LRMP. All feedback or comments are welcomed and can be submitted through the website by clicking on the feedback link.

Vanderhoof LRMP website:

<http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/lup/lrmp/northern/vanderhf/index.html>

