

INTEGRATED LAND USE PLANNING FOR PUBLIC LANDS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

AN INFORMATION PAPER ABOUT INTEGRATED PLANNING FOR PROVINCIAL
PUBLIC LANDS AND RESOURCES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA



Resource Management Division
Province of British Columbia
Victoria, B.C.
February 1997

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Purpose and Scope](#)

1. [Context for Integrated Land Use Planning](#)

1.1 Objectives

1.2 Principles

1.2.1 Procedural Fairness

1.2.2 Interdisciplinary Approach

1.2.3 Consultation Before Action

1.2.4 Access to Information

1.2.5 Systematic Procedure

1.2.6 Plans Address Problems

1.2.7 Socio-Economic Analyses

1.2.8 Defined Decision-Making Authority

1.2.9 Responsiveness

2. [Decision-Making Levels and Types of Land Use Plans](#)

2.1 Provincial Level

2.2 Regional/Sub-Regional Level

2.2.1 Regional Level

2.2.2 Sub-Regional Level

2.3 Local Level

2.4 Hierarchy of Integrated Plans

3. [The Planning Process](#)

3.1 Preliminary Organization

3.2 Plan Initiation

3.3 Information Assembly and Analysis

3.4 Plan Development

3.5 Plan Approval

3.6 Plan Implementation, Monitoring and Review

4. [Links With Other Initiatives](#)

4.1 Link to Other Plans

4.2 Operational Planning

4.3 Forest Practices Code

4.4 Resource-Specific Plans on Public Land

4.5 Private Land Planning

4.6 First Nations Initiatives

[Other References](#)

List of Figures

Figure 1: [Levels of Land Use Decision-Making and Types of Plans](#)

Figure 2: [Components of Land Use Planning](#)

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February 1997

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This paper describes the structure, process and products of integrated planning for provincial public lands and resources in British Columbia. Its purpose is to help government decision-makers, resource managers and the public understand the components of the land use planning system, as they are currently applied in the province (*see footnote*)

Section 1 -- provides a context and describes objectives and principles for integrated land use planning.

Section 2 -- describes the levels of decision-making for land use planning in the province, and the types of integrated plans developed at each of those levels.

Section 3 -- identifies the different stages of the planning process and describes typical products from each stage.

Section 4 -- discusses the linkages between land use planning and other initiatives that are related to land use and resource management.

Footnote: This paper describes current integrated land use planning practices only. A future paper will examine the issues facing continued implementation of land use planning in British Columbia, and the means by which planning practices and products might be improved.

DEFINITIONS

Integrated planning	refers to planning that considers the full range of resources and values present on public lands, and aims to blend or coordinate management strategies and implementation requirements across jurisdictions.
Land use	the term land use as it is used in this paper refers to the allocation, management and use of public lands and resources, including water-based resources.
Resources	the naturally occurring wealth of an area that has actual or potential value and meets some societal need.
Resource Use	the act of employing a resource for a pre-determined purpose, either in a consumptive or non-consumptive manner.

1. CONTEXT FOR INTEGRATED LAND USE PLANNING

1.1 OBJECTIVES

The Province holds in trust the natural resources of British Columbia for present and future generations, and has a responsibility to the public to ensure that resource management represents a balance of community, economic and environmental needs. Integrated land use planning provides a process for agencies, stakeholders, advocacy groups, communities and individuals to engage in collaborative decision-making about land use and resource management.

Integrated land use planning provides the mechanism for making comprehensive decisions about the use of land and resources. It sets the coordinated management direction for future uses of land and resources and allows for the evaluation of the success of management activities over time. It is future-oriented and iterative, allowing plans to be adjusted in response to changing societal values and new circumstances.

Planning is an integral part of the management process for public lands and resources. It provides a means by which decisions are coordinated among responsible provincial agencies and by which land use and resource management conflicts and issues are resolved. Integrated plans help to facilitate the delivery of the public program responsibilities by individual resource management agencies.

Land use planning guides how natural resources will be used today and in the future over a specified area of land, and it can result in such outcomes as:

- acceptable balance among protection, conservation and development objectives;
- land use certainty that promotes investment and community stability;
- integrated direction for government management activities including increased communication, resolution and avoidance of conflicts, and cooperation and coordination across agency functions and lines of authority;
- opportunities for individuals, First Nations, advocacy groups and local governments to participate in planning and to influence government land use decisions that affect them;
- enhanced level of shared knowledge and understanding about land and resource use decisions and their implications;
- support for the delivery of land use and resource management initiatives, such as B.C.'s Protected Areas Strategy, the Forest Practices Code, forest land reserve, allowable timber harvest determination, Aboriginal land claim negotiations and Forest Renewal B.C. activities;
- context by which to evaluate on-the-ground development proposals, reducing resources required for assessing major projects and simplifying approvals for new activities that may be proposed over time; and
- direction to the timing and location of operational-level resource use activities.

1.2 PRINCIPLES

The following principles reflect the philosophy behind integrated land use planning. Integrated planning processes should be structured to support these principles.

1.2.1 PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

Integrated land use planning procedures must be fair in the sense that the people who could be potentially affected by a decision have an opportunity to participate in the planning process. Consequently, integrated planning has a participatory style that is reflected in a team approach among management agencies and application of a wide range of methods by which agencies, advocacy groups, First Nations, business interests, local governments and the public can become involved.

1.2.2 INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Integrated planning provides an interdisciplinary approach to the management of public lands and resources by ensuring the comprehensive consideration of the full range of natural resources, interests and values within a geographic area. These resources and their uses (both renewable and non-renewable) are reflected in the information, concerns and interests that government and non-government participants bring to the planning process. This interdisciplinary approach requires the cooperation of resource management agencies with different functional responsibilities and legal and policy environments, and the production of plans that require joint implementation strategies.

1.2.3 CONSULTATION BEFORE ACTION

Public involvement is a fundamental requirement of integrated planning. The purpose is to develop planning products that, to the greatest extent possible, are based on substantial effective agreement on a course of action. Planning recommendations that are supported by a wide range of interests generally result in more durable decisions.

Public involvement begins early in the process and provides for open communications between government and non-government participants at every stage. A wide range of methods are available to allow public processes to be tailored to the public involvement needs of communities, First Nations, advocacy groups, business interests and individuals.

1.2.4 ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Participants in planning processes expect early and frequent opportunities to influence plan decisions and, to be effective, require access to the best available planning information in a form that they can readily utilize.

1.2.5 SYSTEMATIC PROCEDURE

Strategies for managing lands and resources into the future, including the resolution of resource-use conflicts, are addressed through a series of sequential, systematic planning steps that include identifying objectives and needs, collecting and analysing information, developing land use alternatives, choosing appropriate strategies, and defining implementation actions.

1.2.6 PLANS ADDRESS PROBLEMS

In addition to setting land use strategies for the future, integrated planning is also undertaken to resolve priority resource management issues and address conflicts between resource uses. Issues can be the result of conflicting land use policies at a broad scale, or be confined to comparatively fine levels of local detail. In all cases, integrated planning responds to the needs of planning participants - either resource management agencies that need a particular plan product, or local governments and non-government participants who are concerned about potential effects of decisions.

1.2.7 SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSES

Integrated planning should include an assessment of the implications of alternative resource management strategies on the environment and on affected communities, *including* an indication of short- and long-term strategies for addressing the proposed social or economic changes.

1.2.8 DEFINED DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY

The responsibility for final approvals of integrated plans lies with the provincial government. Provincial goals and regional and sub-regional plans require approval by Cabinet or Cabinet ministers. For local-level plans, approval authorities generally rest with senior agency managers in regional or district locations.

1.2.9 RESPONSIVENESS

Integrated planning must be responsive to changing needs and circumstances during the planning process and in the future when revisions or amendments are needed. Flexibility exists to adjust planning and public involvement procedures to suit specific situations and the requirements of various planning participants.

2. DECISION-MAKING LEVELS AND TYPES OF LAND USE PLANS

Integrated land use planning responds to the need for public policy and comprehensive decisions about lands and resources at different levels of detail. In British Columbia, integrated planning for land use and resource management is undertaken at several levels of detail

- provincial;
- regional/sub-regional level; and
- local.

This section describes these levels of integrated land use planning and the types of plans that result. Figure 1 illustrates the relationships between decision-making levels and the types of plans.

2.1 PROVINCIAL LEVEL

Provincial policies and directives provide guidance to all the other levels of decision-making in the land use planning system. Provincial policies, goals and strategies for the protection and use of the province's natural resources are approved by Cabinet in response to social preference and broad-scale economic and environmental considerations. Examples of provincial-level policies or goals include the draft Provincial Land Use Goals and Policies; the Protected Areas Strategy; the Grizzly Bear Strategy; and the Mineral Strategy.

2.2 REGIONAL/SUB-REGIONAL LEVEL

Regional and sub-regional level plans provide a vision and goals for the allocation and use of public lands and resources over large geographic regions in the province. They require the input of a wide range of interested parties and a number of communities may be affected.

These plans generally provide:

- broad land use zones that are delineated on a map;
- resource management objectives for land use zones;
- broad strategies for integrating resource uses;
- economic development strategies and social implications;
- implementation strategies that provide guidance to individual agency managers; and
- priorities for subsequent, more detailed planning.

Figure 1: Levels of Land Use Decision-Making and Types of Integrated Plans

DECISION-MAKING LEVEL (note 1 below)	EXAMPLES OF INTEGRATED PLANS (note 1 below)	APPROXIMATE SCALE (note 2 below)
<p>Provincial Level</p> <p>(provincial policies for resource use and protection; provincial application)</p> <p>Cabinet-level approval</p>	<p>Provincial Land Use Charter</p> <p>Provincial strategies for resource sectors, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected Area Strategy • Forest Sector Strategy • Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy 	<p>1:2 000 000 or smaller</p>
<p>Regional/Sub-Regional Level</p> <p>(land use zoning, integrated resource management strategies, resource allocation decisions)</p> <p>Cabinet-level approval</p>	<p>Regional land use plans for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vancouver Island, • Cariboo-Chilcotin • Kootenays <p>Special projects such as the Fraser Basin Initiative</p> <p>Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs)</p>	<p>1:250 000 - 1:2 000 000</p> <p>1:100 000 - 1:250 000</p>
<p>Local Level</p> <p>(detailed management guidelines and land use designs, project review processes)</p> <p>Regional or Local level approvals</p>	<p>Local resource use plans, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated Access Management Plans • Community Watershed Plans • Landscape Unit Plans 	<p>1:50 000 - 1:100 000</p>

NOTES

1. There is no requirement for any particular plan to be preceded by a broader-level plan. However, implications for other planning levels should be assessed.
2. Note that levels of detail are approximate. Significant overlap occurs between levels of planning and the detail contained in different types of plans.

Generally, the planning process for regional and sub-regional plans is the most complex, in that these plans have the broadest scope and cover the largest areas. As a result, they generally encompass the greatest range of resource values and potentially affect the largest number of stakeholders.

Because balancing protection and development has important implications for the environment and for resource-dependent communities, regional and sub-regional level plans require the approval of provincial Cabinet ministers. Individual agencies are responsible for implementing the intent of these integrated plans.

2.2.1 REGIONAL LEVEL

Existing regional plans cover areas of 3 million to 8 million hectares and are generally displayed at a scale of 1:2 000 000 or smaller (that is, at a more general level of detail).

There are four recent examples of integrated plans at the regional level in B.C.: the Fraser Basin Initiative, and Regional Land Use Plans for the Kootenays, the Cariboo and Vancouver Island. Current regional-level efforts are concentrated on effective implementation to secure the investments made in developing these regional plans. The development of further regional plans is not currently a priority for integrated planning - integrated planning emphasis will be concentrated for the foreseeable future on completing scheduled and priority plans at the sub-regional and local levels.

2.2.2 SUB-REGIONAL LEVEL

The primary form of sub-regional integrated land use planning is called Land and Resource Management Planning or LRMP. LRMPs address issues similar to those at the regional level but with a greater level of detail and a range of public involvement methods that allow direct access to the process by any interested party. They typically cover areas of 1 to 5 million hectares and are usually developed at a scale of 1:100 000 to 1:250 000.

In the absence of a regional plan, LRMPs serve as the primary zoning and allocation tool. Sub-regional level plans can also be used to refine the broader land use zoning provided by regional plans, and can specify management guidelines to implement the intent of provincial and regional policies and plans. Plans at this level provide guidance to local-level plans and to resource management decisions at more detailed scales.

A number of LRMPs are reaching concluding stages and, as these processes are completed, new plans will be added to the list of LRMPs in-progress.

2.3 LOCAL LEVEL

Integrated plans at the local level involve detailed consideration of the natural topographical and ecological features of the land base, usually over an area the size of a watershed or series of watersheds. This scale of ecological analysis and design provides specific direction for operational, on-the-ground practices. Decisions at this level are concerned with designing a pattern of use that considers local ecological conditions as well as economic and social implications. This pattern is designed to achieve specific resource management objectives through the application of specific practices in space and time.

While the map scale for this level of planning is generally 1:50 000 to 1:100 000, the size of a planning area will vary depending on local issues and public expectations. Local plans provide guidance for operational planning, but do not generally specify the operational practices themselves.

Where regional or sub-regional plans exist over the same planning area, local plans take broad direction from them with respect to the emphasis on resource management and development. Local plans are generally approved by local or regional managers of participating resource management agencies.

Over the past decade, there have been a large number of local planning initiatives that have served to integrate resources, jurisdictions and public expectations. Innovations in planning and public involvement procedures continue to evolve at the local level based on resource management circumstances and community needs. The most recent focus in local integrated planning has been in the development of "landscape unit planning" which places resource management decisions in the context of biophysical units at the landscape level (that is, an area the size of a watershed or group of small watersheds). Landscape unit planning (see following note) is expected to become a prominent feature of integrated planning at the local level over the next several years.

Past integrated plans at the local level include such plans as community watershed plans, multi-sector coordinated access management plans and comprehensive local resource use plans.

(Note: Comprehensive landscape unit planning should not be confused with the setting of landscape unit objectives under the Forest Practices Code. These objectives may be defined a number of ways. For example, some landscape unit objectives may be derived from a comprehensive landscape unit plan, while others may simply reflect the judgment of accountable agency officials based on a technical analysis of resource values, without having a landscape unit plan in place.)

2.4 HIERARCHY OF INTEGRATED PLANS

The land use planning system is often referred to as having a hierarchical or sequential structure, within which each level of planning provides direction to subsequent, more detailed levels. While this structure accurately describes the overall planning philosophy, it does not reflect what actually takes place across the province. In many cases, planning is not done in a hierarchical or sequential order because:

the demand for a plan is driven by resource conflicts, ministerial priorities, or the impending need for operational guidance;

the issues to be addressed determine the scale of investigation and analysis required;

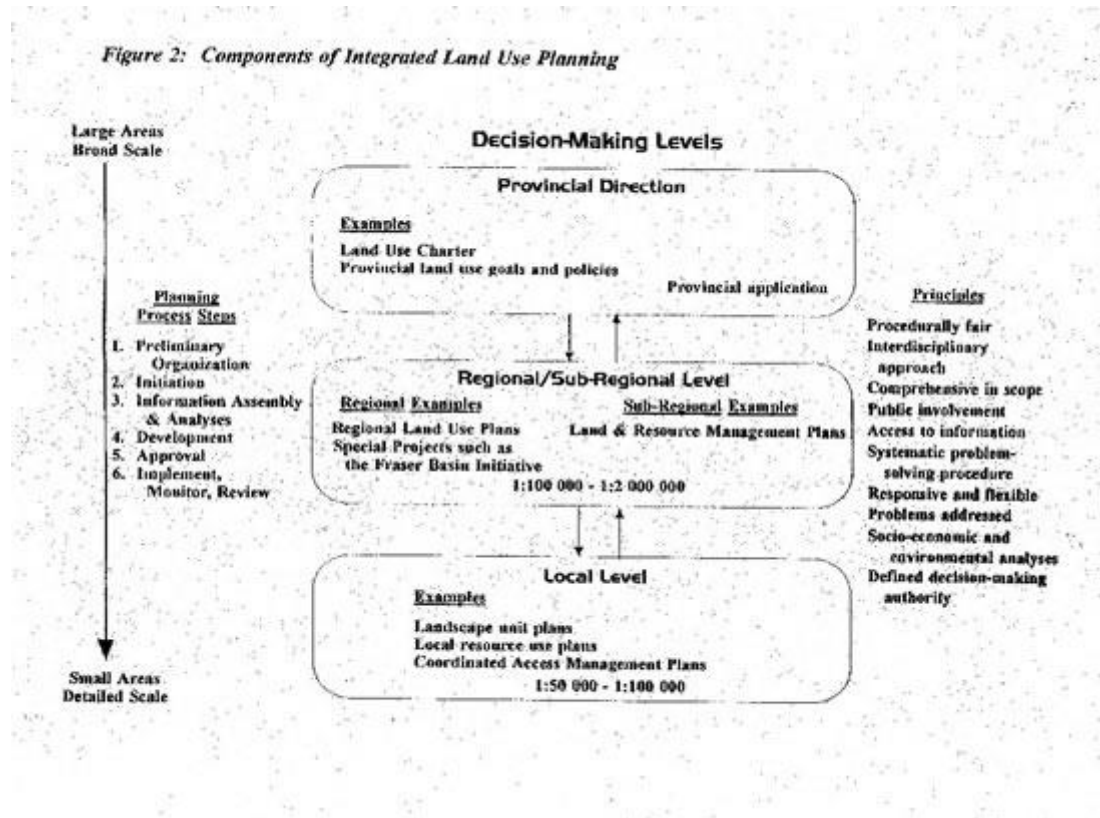
government does not have the resources to complete planning at each level for a given area; and

some aspects of land use do not fit neatly into any category (e.g., utility and transportation corridor planning).

Where plans currently exist at different levels for a given area, and as they come to exist in the future, each plan will provide direction to more detailed levels. In this sense the system is hierarchical in nature and plans can be nested, one within the context of another.

Where a range of plans does not currently exist over a given area, new plans must be developed in the context of previous decisions and broader-scale management patterns. A variety of plans will exist without the benefit of a formal, broader-scale land use plan.

FIGURE 2 SHOWS THE GENERAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COMPONENTS OF THE INTEGRATED LAND USE PLANNING SYSTEM.



3. THE PLANNING PROCESS

The following is a general description of the planning process used to develop integrated land use plans, regardless of level of decision-making or type of plan. The weight given to each of the planning stages during a specific process or for a specific type of plan is governed by a number of factors, including the problems being addressed and the end uses of the plan. Common planning products at each stage are also listed.

Although the stages occur in order, a number of planning activities can be undertaken concurrently and there is flexibility to return to an earlier stage when required.

3.1 PRELIMINARY ORGANIZATION

- Identify issues, conditions and responsible agencies.
- Assess the status of resources and describe agency commitments.
- Identify public issues and levels of concern through preliminary contacts with affected public interests.
- Consult with local governments to achieve their effective participation.
- Determine administrative and planning boundaries.
- Identify intended planning products and link these with issues that need resolution in the process.
- Prepare any required assessment reports.
- Make staff assignments and conduct any necessary training.

Common products: Assessment report, planning area and mandate, list of intended planning products and their applications.

3.2 PLAN INITIATION

- Identify technical planning procedures and information requirements.
- Identify public education and engagement methods.
- Identify logistic and professional support requirements
- Convene initial public discussions about issues, process and products.
- Prepare detailed work plans, budget and staffing needs.
- Prepare and finalize terms of reference.

Common products: Terms of reference, detailed work plans, critical path charts, budgets and staffing.

3.3 INFORMATION ASSEMBLY AND ANALYSIS

- Compile present land use information.
- Compile the information base required for the plan.
- Prepare base maps and supporting documentation.

- Prepare statements of interest and map public interests.
- Establish the values of importance to the public.
- Interpret the information base for planning use.
- Identify preliminary planning units.

Common products: Base map and planning units, resource inventories, present uses, public interests.

3.4 PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- Develop land and resource objectives in each planning unit.
- Establish the criteria and indicators for measuring the achievement of objectives, based on both science and social preferences.
- Invite public scrutiny of assumptions and analysis methods.
- Identify alternative land use zoning and management strategies for achieving objectives.
- Assess the technical compatibility and balance of public interests addressed by each alternative.
- Analyse alternatives to assess environmental, economic and social implications.
- Invite public scrutiny of land and resource use alternatives and implications.
- Select the best land and resource use alternative based on objectives and impacts.
- Prepare implementation strategy.
- Prepare draft plan.

Common products: Land use zones, resource objectives, management strategies, measurable indicators, draft plan alternatives for testing, analytical reports, recommended plan.

3.5 PLAN APPROVAL

- Check the suitability of the draft plan with government and non-government participants.
- Review the plan with the broader public as required.
- Submit the draft plan to the formal approval process within government.

Common products: Approved plan and implementation procedures (timeframes, responsibilities, phase-in needs, business plan), documents necessary for decisions, communications plan.

3.6 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

- Monitor and enforce the approved plan.
- Review operational effectiveness against plan objectives and indicators.
- Amend the plan with new information and monitoring results.

Common products: Monitoring reports, research reports, revised plan and revised implementation procedures, legal designations and negotiated agreements with tenure holders.

4. LINKS WITH OTHER INITIATIVES

4.1 LINK TO OTHER PLANS

Because integrated plans cover a specified area and address a particular array of resource values and social and economic interests, it is important that they relate to other land use plans and management activities. Where management direction and planning affects adjacent areas covered by other planning processes, certain degrees of integration or compatibility are required.

In general, plans that cover a wider area provide the broad vision and objectives for land and resource use. It is usually the task of more detailed plans to interpret this more strategic direction. In the absence of a broader scale plan, land and resource uses will be based on workable practices within the regulatory framework provided by law.

4.2 OPERATIONAL PLANNING

Operational planning establishes plans for resource-specific and on-the-ground activities and practices. It is the means by which provincial resource management agencies implement resource-specific programs, under the guidelines provided by broader level policies and plans.

At the operational level (at a scale of 1:5 000 to 1:50 000), specific tools, methods and practices are prescribed to achieve particular patterns of development or specific objectives for resource use. Decisions are generally of a technical nature and involve choosing appropriate practices and methods for carrying out development. Operational planning may be multi-disciplinary in nature, or aimed at meeting the requirements of a specific resource sector. Where regional, subregional or local plans cover the same planning area, it is expected (and may be legally required by the Forest Practices Code) that operational plans be consistent with the direction provided by those plans. Operational level plans are generally mandatory in response to development regulations or tenure requirements.

4.3 FOREST PRACTICES CODE

Under B.C.'s Forest Practices Code, consistency can now be legally required between forestry operational plans and components of integrated land use plans, where these components are designated as "higher level plans" under the Code. Where such consistency becomes a Code requirement, operational plans must be written and approved in a consistent manner. Similarly, approval of an operational plan should ensure that subsequent operational decisions reflect the intent of the original integrated land use plan (or plan components), as designated under the Code.

4.4 RESOURCE-SPECIFIC PLANS ON PUBLIC LAND

Individual agencies in the resource management field often develop resource-specific plans to guide their program areas and provide strategies for the development of a particular resource. For example, the wildlife program develops regional wildlife management plans on which funding and resourcing decisions can be based, and pre-tenure planning in the north-east guides oil and gas exploration and development. Sectoral plans provide agencies with objectives and strategies for

consideration in integrated planning processes and, in turn, take direction from approved integrated plans.

4.5 PRIVATE LAND PLANNING

The Municipal Act enables local governments to prepare official community plans and regional growth strategies. In general, the principal land use planning responsibility of local governments involves planning for human settlement on privately-owned lands (that is, communities and lands settled, or to be settled). However, in many parts of the province, pockets of public and private land are closely interspersed or adjacent to one another. In circumstances where public lands are included in local government plans, these plans refer to provincial public land policies.

Common interests of both the provincial and local governments can be addressed through joint participation in planning processes. Provincial agency representatives provide information necessary to describe and analyze provincial interests during growth strategy processes, and collaborate on growth strategy implementation. Similarly, local government representatives participate directly in provincial land use planning processes. As a result, the appropriate management responses can be made in provincial agency plans, regional growth strategies and official community plans so that long-term sustainability of both public resources and communities is addressed.

4.6 FIRST NATIONS INITIATIVES

The Province recognizes the constitutional rights of aboriginal people to occupy and use lands and resources. These "aboriginal rights" flow from historic activities that were integral to the distinct society and culture of the aboriginal group. Treaty negotiations will define aboriginal self-government and aboriginal rights to land and resources in a manner that fits with contemporary realities of economics, law and systems of property rights in British Columbia. Land use planning should incorporate and support, and not interfere with, negotiations on aboriginal self-government and treaties.

To best protect aboriginal rights and interests in lands and resources, integrated land use planning should include First Nations advice and expertise. First Nations are encouraged to participate in all integrated planning processes, and numerous mechanisms continued to be used to facilitate this participation.

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