

Landscape Unit Planning 2000 Annual Update



**Forest Practices Branch, Ministry of Forests
Habitat Branch, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks
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Landscape unit objectives were introduced by the Forest Practices Code Act of British Columbia in 1995 and are the product of an interagency process called landscape unit planning. While landscape unit objectives may deal with all forest resources, the Strategic Planning Regulation establishes their early focus on biodiversity conservation.

In March 1999, the ministries of Forests and Environment, Lands and Parks approved the *Landscape Unit Planning Guide* (LUPG). The LUPG provides standard direction for landscape unit planning across the province and sets old growth and wildlife tree retention as the initial priority for biodiversity objectives.

All Ministry of Forests' regions updated their landscape unit planning strategies to ensure conformity with the LUPG. These strategies propose landscape unit boundaries, biodiversity emphasis, and scheduling for legal establishment. The existing deadline for old growth and wildlife tree retention objectives is July 31, 2002 (under review).

Up to the end of 1999, 67 landscape units were established. Of these units, 12 had what could be termed typical objective sets. The other 55 simply had an objective that established biodiversity emphasis (this was done to facilitate the timber supply review).

Progress Summary: January to December 2000

- Landscape unit planning training completed
- Province-wide landscape unit planning initiated
- One landscape unit established with objectives, substantial progress in all regions on detailed analysis necessary for developing objectives
- Data standards for landscape unit planning tested and finalized
- The landscape unit planning template developed, tested and implemented
- The ministers established several resource management zone higher level plans (HLPs) that direct landscape unit planning
- Landscape unit planning monitoring system initiated
- The impact of landscape unit planning on forest industry operating costs estimated

Progress Details: January to December 2000

Landscape units

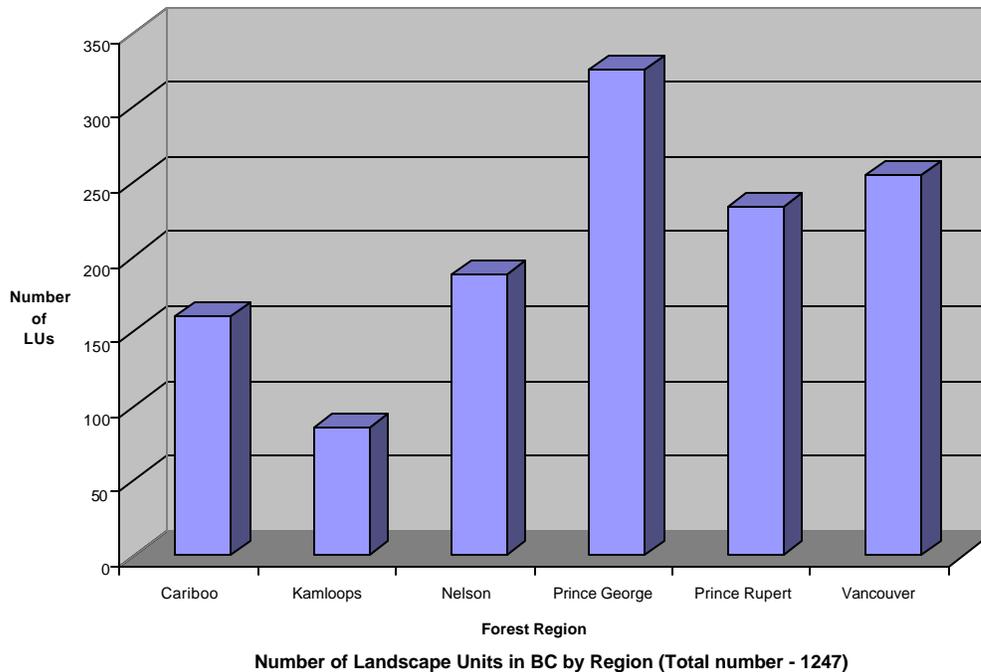
- 1247 draft landscape unit boundaries are delineated. 68 are legally established – 12 in Bulkley, 1 in Sunshine Coast, 31 in Kootenay Lake and 24 in Arrow.

Landscape unit objectives

- The Sunshine Coast Forest District established the only landscape unit objectives (for the Bunster area) in 2000.



Figure 1



- Resource management zone objectives were established in several areas that will influence direction for affected landscape units:
 - The Vancouver Island HLP requires landscape unit objectives for mature seral forest in some special management zones and sets representation at the site series/surrogate level; in some enhanced and special management zones, the HLP adjusts targets and policy requirements for retention and recruitment of old growth; and requires that relevant objectives be in place by December, 2002
 - The Lakes Forest District HLP requires objectives for early and mature seral forest; sets standards to achieve interior forest condition in old growth management areas (OGMAs); establishes representation at the ecosystem type level
 - The Bulkley Forest District HLP requires objectives for early and mature seral forest, stand structure, species composition, patch size, connectivity, interior forest condition, as well as for other forest resources
 - The Cariboo-Chilcotin Land Use Plan HLP includes biodiversity targets at the subunit level that are being refined to the landscape level through subregional planning.
- More detailed policy direction for wildlife tree retention was approved in May 2000 and the LUPG was amended accordingly.



Table 1: Landscape Unit Summaries by Region – Totals to Date

Region	Total LUs*	LUs with Planning Initiated	LUs with Analysis Completed	LUs established	OGMAs Established (ha)
Vancouver	255	255	199	1	3630
Nelson	188	188		55	0
Kamloops	86	86			0
Prince Rupert	233	188**	12	12	0***
Cariboo	160	160			0
Prince George	325	325			0
Total	1247	1202	211	68	3630

*The total number of units in four regions changed since the last edition of regional landscape unit planning strategy.

** Due to the LRMP, 45 units in Cassiar had only boundaries set - no data work yet.

***The twelve units in Bulkley were established prior to the LUPG and have objectives that are similar to OGMAs and wildlife tree retention but not directly comparable.

Regional Landscape Unit Planning Strategies

- Forest Practices Branch prepared *Regional Landscape Unit Planning Strategies: A Provincial Summary Report of the 1999 Revisions*. It summarizes information on landscape unit planning as well as revisions made in 1999. Copies of the report are available on the Forest Practices Branch website.

Organization

- District planners and the Forest Ecosystem Specialist with support from Data Service Centres and GIS technical staff are the front line implementers in each Forest District. Regions provide coordinating services.
- Headquarters specialists meet regularly to coordinate the provincial delivery of landscape unit planning.

Data standards and preparation

- Forest Practices Branch and Information Management Group finalized standards and procedures for landscape unit data preparation in June and posted them for staff use. They are now used in Vancouver, Nelson, Prince George, and Prince Rupert (a survey is underway to determine the status of these specifications in Kamloops and Cariboo).
- LU data sets are complete or being prepared for: Morice, Fort Nelson, Vanderhoof, Ft St James, Robson Valley, QCI, Sunshine Coast, Kootenay Lake, Arrow.



Decision support tools

- Forest Practices Branch and the Information Management Group released the landscape unit planning template. The template is a computer-based decision-support tool that generates a set of thematic maps and reports (LUPG tables 2.8, 2.9 and 3.1) to assist planning staff develop old growth objectives and map OGMAs.
- The landscape unit planning template is currently being tested in Morice, Sunshine Coast, Vanderhoof, Ft Nelson, and Arrow.

Monitoring

- The landscape unit planning monitoring framework is based upon the model of effectiveness and implementation monitoring in *Designing a Landscape Unit Plan Monitoring Framework: Preliminary Scoping of Issues and Considerations*, October 2000.
- In November, Forest Practices Branch awarded a contract to develop the landscape unit planning monitoring framework for delivery by March 31, 2001.
- MELP and MOF established a monitoring project management team and have determined most of the government, industry and environmental non-government organization representatives for a review team. There is a draft project charter (terms of reference) for the teams.
- The first of three monitoring workshops was held in Nelson Region December 13 and included Ministry of Forests, and Environment, Lands and Parks, as well as industry and environmental non-government organization representatives – a large amount of input was collated for both implementation and effectiveness monitoring.

Training

- Between February and May of 2000, the Forest Practices Branch and Habitat Branch delivered eleven training sessions to more than 500 individuals (see Figure 2). Training was provided in all regions except Cariboo where regional staff, under the direction of the Interagency Management Committee, developed technical procedures and delivered training through the region's sub-regional planning process.
- Forest Practices Branch's assessment of this training, *Landscape Unit Planning Guide Training: Summary of Participant Response*, is posted on the branch website.



- Staff delivered training on the template for landscape unit planning at five pilot sites and began work on a computer based tutorial training package for District planning staff who have already received GeoMedia 3 or 4 training.

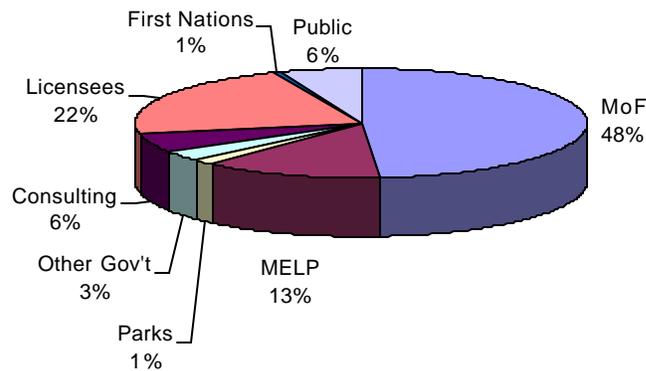


Figure 2. Attendance at LUPG Training Sessions by Affiliation

Communication and extension

- Forest Practices Branch has a website for landscape unit planning at <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/planning/lup/index.htm>. This site contains links to all major policy direction, training, and supporting documents. There is also another webpage on writing resource management objectives located at <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/planning/writing.htm>.
- Forest Practices Branch, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and the Land Use Coordination Office, completed a detailed brochure on higher level planning, *Higher Level Plans: Greater Strength for Land Use Objectives*, available on the branch website or in hard copy from the branch

Issues and Upcoming Activities

Implementation and policy issues

- Ongoing land use planning and the eight-month delay in the delivery of LUPG training may require an extension to the 2002 landscape unit planning deadline.
- Data preparation (integration of data from multiple sources, and support from Data Service Centres) may be a bottleneck in some areas due to other priorities.
- Resource management zone higher level plans have now introduced requirements to complete landscape unit objectives for seral stage distribution, patch size,



connectivity and other elements of biodiversity that were not recognized as priorities in the LUPG. Policy work and decision-support tools to implement these requirements are under development.

- Other policy issues related to woodlots, natural disturbance type 4, old growth attributes, rare ecosystems and biodiversity targets should be resolved in the coming year.
- Government continues to deal with the issue of operational costs of landscape unit planning to the forest industry.
- Co-ordinating the delivery of LUPG and Identified Wildlife Management Strategy (e.g., marbled murrelet habitat) will be essential to meeting the goals of both programs.
- Demands to accelerate or expand landscape unit planning to deal with issues such as special management zones continues to grow. To reduce duplication, initiatives on water management planning should be coordinated with landscape unit planning.

Upcoming milestones and activities

- The ministries of Forests and Environment, Lands and Parks will complete a proposal for a comprehensive implementation and effectiveness monitoring framework by March 31st, 2001.
- A cumulative total of 100 landscape units and associated objectives will be established by March 31st, 2002. A further 250 – 300 landscape units will have objectives complete and ready to be advertised.
- Complete at least one major provincial workshop on implementing landscape unit planning.
- Prepare an implementation strategy and develop policy and decision-support tools to meet demands for the expansion of landscape unit planning.
- Resolve the operating cost issue with industry.
- The Kootenay-Boundary Land Use Plan HLP comes into effect in January 2001 and will provide additional direction for landscape unit planning in Nelson Forest Region.