

LANDSCAPE UNIT PLANNING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS General Version

A. Background on Landscape Unit Planning

What are landscape units?

Landscape units are areas of land used for long-term planning of resource management activities. They are usually 50,000 to 100,000 hectares in size.

What is landscape unit planning?

An important component of the forest planning system in British Columbia, landscape unit planning produces objectives that are one type of higher level plan under the Forest Practice Code of British Columbia.

How are landscape units different from the resource management zones coming out of Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs)?

Landscape units are usually smaller geographical areas than resource management zones. In areas with legal resource management zone objectives, landscape unit objectives can provide additional detail for more effective operational planning.

What are the priorities for landscape unit planning?

The current priorities for landscape unit planning are the conservation of old growth and the retention of wildlife trees.

How will other resource values be addressed?

Landscape unit objectives and strategies for other biodiversity values (e.g., maintaining younger forests) and other forest resources (e.g., recreation) may be established where ministers have approved higher level plan objectives that deal with these values.

In the absence of an approved higher level plan, objectives for other resource values may be developed in draft form. The draft objectives must be tested with the cooperation of licensees for a limited time period. Draft objectives must not delay establishment of objectives for priority biodiversity values and must not have additional timber supply impacts for licensees.

B. Purpose and Contents of the Landscape Unit Planning Guide

What is the purpose of the Guide? What does the Guide contain?

The Guide is a technical reference for staff in the Ministry of Forests and the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks. The Guide contains Government policy direction on landscape biodiversity and consolidates all current and new policy on this subject. It includes technical procedures for carrying out analyses; preparing landscape unit objectives and strategies; and writing and establishing landscape unit objectives.

C. Conservation of Biodiversity

How will the Guide contribute to the conservation of old growth forests?

The procedures in the Guide are focused on maintaining representative areas of old growth forest across each landscape unit.

How will implementation of the Guide help British Columbia meet its international commitment to protect biodiversity?

The Guide is a significant step in meeting national and international commitments to protect British Columbia's rich biodiversity heritage. It is a made in British Columbia approach to balancing environmental and economic needs, and complements the Protected Areas Strategy and the Identified Wildlife Management Strategy.

How does the Guide relate to the Biodiversity Guidebook?

The Guide draws on and includes key information in the Biodiversity Guidebook. Parts of the Biodiversity Guidebook are now outdated. Therefore, where the Guide differs from the Biodiversity Guidebook, the direction in the Guide prevails.

How does the Guide relate to the recently released Identified Wildlife Management Strategy (IWMS)?

This Guide provides the framework for landscape unit planning. Landscape unit planning and the IWMS are key initiatives for meeting the Forest Practices Code of British Columbia's goal of conserving biological diversity.

Landscape unit planning in conjunction with other provisions in the Code (e.g., riparian management) will address habitat requirements for the majority of wildlife species. The IWMS addresses the habitat requirements of specific species considered to be at risk.

An Implementation Advisory Group has been established to advise on the implementation of both this Guide and the IWMS.

D. Impacts on the Forest Industry

Will implementing the Guide impact timber supply?

Implementing the Guide will adhere to provincial timber supply impact limits set by government. These limits, as identified in the *Forest Practices Code Timber Supply Analysis, 1996* report, are 4.1% in the short term and 4.3% in the long term.

Will implementing the Guide increase forest industry costs? How will these costs be minimized?

Implementing the Guide may result in some increased costs to the forest industry. The Guide contains clear criteria for managing costs to the forest industry, including:

- not locating Old Growth Management Areas over approved cutblocks;
- not locating Old Growth Management Areas where main haul roads exist or are anticipated;
- agency staff working closely with forest industry staff to minimize costs while maintaining biodiversity values.

Will the forest industry be compensated for loss of timber supply or increased costs associated with implementing the Guide?

There are no plans to compensate Licensees for loss of timber supply or increased operational costs which may occur in implementing this part of the Forest Practices Code. Our intent is to manage impacts so that major cost problems are avoided.

E. Impacts on the Mining and Ranching Industries

How will implementing the Guide impact the mining industry?

Implementing the Guide will not have an impact on the status of existing mineral and gas permits. Exploration and development activities are permitted in areas set aside for old growth conservation.

How will implementing the Guide impact the ranching industry?

Implementing the Guide will not impact ranching activities. Range use will be permitted in areas set aside for old growth conservation but should proceed in a way that is sensitive to the old growth values in these areas (e.g. fencing and salting should not take place in these areas).

F. Stakeholder Involvement

How have stakeholders been involved in the development of the Guide?

Representatives from the major forest industry associations, the British Columbia Environmental Network and the Sierra Legal Defense Fund have reviewed and commented on key draft versions of the Guide.

How will stakeholders be involved in implementation of the Guide?

Representatives from the major forest industry associations and environmental groups have joined with Ministry of Forests and Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks staff to form an Implementation Advisory Group to advise on the implementation of the Guide and the Identified Wildlife Management Strategy. This group will:

- advise on the design and content of training on the Guide;
- advise on the development of a strategy to monitor the implementation of the Guide;
- work with senior government staff to advise on major issues with stakeholder groups which cannot be resolved locally.

Stakeholders and the public will be provided opportunity to review and comment on landscape unit plans developed using the procedures in the Guide.

G. Implementation of the Guide

How will the impacts of landscape unit planning on biodiversity and timber supply be monitored as the Guide is implemented?

A detailed provincial monitoring strategy is being developed which will include: formal semi-annual reviews; compilation of results from districts and regions; more detailed evaluation in selected districts and a quick response mechanism to deal with significant policy or technical issues.

How will government staff be trained to implement the Guide?

Training will commence in May 1999 and must precede finalisation and approval of objectives. Training will consist of separate sessions focused on the needs of statutory decision-makers, technical staff and the public. Stakeholders will be provided the opportunity to attend the training as appropriate. The Implementation Advisory Group is advising on the design and content of the training.

H. Distribution of the Guide

How will the Guide be distributed?

The Guide is available:

- electronically via the Forest Practices Branch - Strategic Forest Planning web site (<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/HFP/PLANNING/LUP/index.htm>),
- in printed form distributed to government staff, major stakeholders, professional associations and libraries
- in printed form from Queens Printer, (after April 7, 1999).

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