

Nilkitkwa
Landscape Unit Plan

BULKLEY/CASSIAR FOREST DISTRICT

September 1999

Pre-amble

On April 21, 1998 the Bulkley Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) was approved by cabinet. At the time, MOF and MELP agreed that the best tool to implement the operational practices in the LRMP was through Landscape Unit Plans. As a result, the District Manager established and the DEO approved seven Biodiversity Objectives as landscape unit objectives on May 30, 1999. At the same time, their associated strategies were deemed District Manager (DM) Policy.

Based on LRMP direction, objectives for wildlife, fish, LRMP special management zones, timber, recreation, visual quality and range were developed, reviewed by the public, licensees, and branch staff with comments incorporated and were close to being ready for DM sign off by the beginning of June, 1999. On June 3, 1999 a memo regarding **Strategic Land Use Planning and Landscape Unit Planning** was released, signed by the Chief Forester and the Assistant Deputy Ministers of MELP, MEM, and LUCO. This memo states that Higher Level Plan Resource Management Zone (RMZ) objectives signed by cabinet would have to be established before objectives, other than the approved biodiversity objectives, could be established by the District Manager.

Higher level plan RMZ objectives are currently being developed. In the interim, in order to provide guidance in the development of operational plans, objectives for wildlife, fish, LRMP special management zones, timber, recreation, visual quality and range, and their associated strategies are now DM policy.

November 4, 1998

Re: Rationale for establishing Biodiversity Objectives in Landscape Unit Plans in the Bulkley TSA as Higher Level Plans under the Forest Practices Code of BC Act

1

The following provides rationale for my establishing objectives 1-7 in the following Landscape Units, as Higher Level Plan.

Babine	Chapman	Copper	Corya
Deep Creek	Blunt	Harold Price	Nilkitkwa
Reiseter	Telkwa	Torkelson	Trout Creek

The Bulkley LRMP, approved in March, 1998, by Government, is Ministerial Policy and was seriously considered. The LRMP represents an agreement negotiated by public and agency representatives using current information, scientific knowledge and agency policies. This agreement has been accepted by Government and will be delivered through Landscape Unit Plans which give clear direction to operational plans.

In establishing Landscape Unit Plan biodiversity objectives as Higher Level Plans, it is recognized that the information supporting them will change over time. It is fully expected that the objectives will need some form of revision based on those changes, in order that they continue to reflect current information, knowledge and policy. The Landscape Unit Plan is therefore recognized as a living document that will be subject to periodic revision as and when determined by the District Manager and the Designated Environmental Officer.

At this time, it is known that these objectives will be reviewed:

- In 1999, concurrent with the establishment of objectives for values other than biodiversity
- As more information and knowledge is gained about First Nations values and specific sites of interest through consultation with each First Nation group, at which time these Higher Level Plan objectives may need to be amended, or new objectives added.

In establishing objectives 1-7 (and especially objective #4), I have read and am mindful of the Deputy Minister's directive on achieving acceptable biodiversity impacts. It is believed that biodiversity objectives being established will not materially affect the timber supply impacts that were agreed to through the LRMP and accepted by Government during the LRMP approval process. The Bulkley TSA is, however, currently undergoing Timber Supply Review II, the results of which will provide further information on current timber supply impacts associated with biodiversity objectives 1- 7. Upon completion of TSR II, these objectives will be reviewed.

Original Signed

Original Signed

Note: These objectives have been renumbered such that they read 1.1 to 1.7

Guenter Stahl, District Manager
Bulkley/Cassiar Forest District

Reid White
Designated Environment Official
I approve of this rationale

Order to Establish the Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit and Objectives

Pursuant to Section 4 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*, I hereby order that the Crown land portion of the watershed of the Nilkitkwa River, including all waters flowing into the Nilkitkwa River, its headwater lake (Onerka Lake) and its main tributaries Barbeau Creek and the west arm of the Nilkitkwa river to the boundary of the Babine Landscape Unit and the Bulkley Timber Supply Area, will be established as a landscape unit effective May 30,1999. The objectives, which are numbered 1 to 7 and attached to this Order, will be established as landscape unit objectives effective May 30,1999.

The boundaries of the Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit are shown on the 1:750,000 scale map, attached as Map 1.

note: Landscape Unit maps are available at a 1:50,000 scale at the Bulkley/Cassiar Forest District Office.

Original Signed November 4, 1998

Guenter Stahl, District Manager,
Bulkley/Cassiar Forest District

Date

File Number 12500-25/nilkit

Note: These objectives have been renumbered such that they read 1.1 to 1.7

Statement of District Manager’s Policy

Under section 41(1) of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* (the “Act”) I am required to approve an operational plan or amendment that has been prepared and submitted in accordance with the Act, the regulations and the standards, and that I am satisfied will adequately manage and conserve the forest resources to the area to which it applies.

I have reviewed the strategies for objectives 1 through 7³ of the Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit Plan and believe they are relevant to, and will provide appropriate guidance in, the development of operational plans and amendments which pertain to the area covered by the Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit Plan. I therefore recommend that these strategies be considered and incorporated into operational plans and amendments where possible.

I will continue to evaluate each operational plan or amendment on its own merit prior to making a decision on whether or not it should be approved. To assist me in this process where an operational plan or amendment does not incorporate the strategies I will expect an adequate explanation of the circumstances which justify their omission.

Approval:

Original Signed November 4, 1998

Guenter Stahl, District Manager
Bulkley/Cassiar Forest District

Date

File Number 12500-25/ nil

Note: These objectives have been renumbered such that they read 1.1 to 1.7

November 8, 1998

File: 47250-35/Bulkley

Guenter Stahl
District Manager, Bulkley/Cassiar Forest District
Bag 6000
Smithers BC V0J 2N0

Dear Guenter:

Re: Approval of Biodiversity Objectives for the Bulkley Landscape Unit Plans

I was pleased to receive from the district's landscape unit planning team the biodiversity objectives for the landscape units in the Bulkley TSA for my approval under section 5.18.3 of *Higher Level Plans: Policy and Procedures*.

It is my understanding that the Bulkley TSA has a cabinet approved Land and Resource Management Plan and that these biodiversity objectives are consistent with this plan.

As the designated environment official (DEO), and in accordance with Section 5.18.3 of *Higher Level Plans: Policy and Procedures*, and under section 4(2) of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*, I declare my approval for the District Manager of the Bulkley/Cassiar Forest District to formally establish the biodiversity objectives numbered 1 to 7 for the following landscape units:

Nilkitkwa	Babine	Torkelson	Harold Price
Blunt	Chapman	Reiseter	Deep Creek
Corya	Trout Creek	Copper	Telkwa

Yours truly,

Original signed November 8, 1998

Reid White, R.P.Bio., P.Eng.
Regional Manager, Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat
Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks - Skeena Region

Note: These objectives have been renumbered such that they read 1.1 to 1.7

Statement of District Manager’s Policy

Under section 41(1) of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* (the “Act”), I am required to approve an operational plan or amendment that has been prepared and submitted in accordance with the Act, the regulations and the standards, and that I am satisfied will adequately manage and conserve the forest resources in the area to which it applies.

I have reviewed the following objectives and connected strategies of the Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit Plan and believe they are relevant to, and provide appropriate guidance in, developing operational plans and amendments which adequately manage and conserve the forest resources of the area covered by the Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit Plan:

Wildlife objectives	2.1 to 2.2
Fish objectives	3.1
LRMP Special Management Zones	4.1
Timber objectives	5.1 to 5.2

Accordingly, where an operational plan or amendment does not incorporate these applicable strategies, I will expect an adequate explanation of the circumstances which justify the omission of, or deviation from, any applicable strategy.

Approval:

Original Signed September 23, 1999

Guenter Stahl, District Manager
Bulkley/Cassiar Forest District

Date

File Number 12500-25/Nil

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	I
THE PLANNING AREA	III
OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES	V
BIODIVERSITY	V
Core Ecosystems.....	v
Landscape Corridors.....	ix
Seral Stage.....	xi
Patch Size Distribution	xii
Coniferous and Deciduous Diversity.....	xiv
Stand Structure.....	xiv
WILDLIFE	XVI
Mountain Goat	xvi
FISH	XVII
Fish Habitat.....	xvii
LRMP SPECIAL MANAGEMENT ZONES	XVIII
Barbeau Creek.....	xviii
TIMBER	XIX
Timber Supply	xix
RECREATION	XXI
VISUAL QUALITY.....	XXI
ACCESS	XXI
IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW	XXII
IMPLEMENTATION	XXII
Compliance with the LRMP	xxii
Plan implementation and transition strategy.....	xxii
FIRST NATIONS	XXIII
MONITORING	XXIV
PLAN REVIEW AND AMENDMENT.....	XXIV
APPENDICES	XXVI
APPENDIX I. RED AND BLUE LISTED SPECIES LIKELY IN THE NILKITKWA LANDSCAPE UNIT	XXVI
APPENDIX II. ECOSYSTEM NETWORK SUMMARY OF THE NILKITKWA LANDSCAPE UNIT	XXVII
APPENDIX III. ACRONYMS	XXVIII
APPENDIX IV. GLOSSARY OF RESOURCE PLANNING TERMS.....	XXIX

LIST OF MAPS

MAP 1. LANDSCAPE UNITS IN BULKLEY TIMBER SUPPLY AREA	2
MAP 2. AMALGAMATED MAP	7
MAP 3. STATUS OF NON-OPERATIONAL ROADS.....	18

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1. DECISION MATRIX FOR HARVESTING IN CORE ECOSYSTEMS	6
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LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. DECISION MATRIX FOR HARVESTING OPTIONS IN LANDSCAPE CORRIDORS.	9
TABLE 2. OLD SERAL STAGE TARGETS.....	10
TABLE 3. MATURE PLUS OLD FOREST TARGETS	10
TABLE 4. EARLY SERAL TARGETS.....	10
TABLE 5. PERCENT OF FORESTED AREA BY NDT.....	11
TABLE 6. TARGETS FOR WILDLIFE TREE PATCH RETENTION IN CUTBLOCKS.....	13
TABLE 7. OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES RELATING TO ACCESS	19
TABLE 8. SUMMARY OF TRANSITION REQUIREMENTS FOR OPERATIONAL PLANS	21

Introduction

The Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit Plan (LUP) outlines the objectives and the strategies for the resource management of the Upper Nilkitkwa River watershed within the Bulkley portion of the Bulkley/Cassiar Forest District (Map 1) . These objectives and strategies have been developed by the Ministry of Forests (MOF), BC Environment (BCE), and operational foresters involved with managing the forest resources in this landscape. This plan follows Ministerial Policy as stated in the signed Bulkley Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) signed by the Chief Forester and the Prince Rupert Regional Landscape Unit (RLUP) planning strategy signed by the District Manager, Regional Manger, and Regional Director. Additionally, the Biodiversity Guidebook was used to guide the development of this LUP.

The Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit and its objectives are established by the District Manager of the Bulkley/Cassiar Forest District pursuant to Section 4.0 of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* (the “Act”). Prior to establishment under the Act, the landscape unit and objectives will be approved by the Designated Environment Official for the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks. The objectives form the Higher Level Plan and provide direction for operational plans. The objectives for the Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit provide sufficient detail to provide direction to the operational plans, yet remain flexible to allow creative solutions for meeting land management objectives. The objectives may be amended with appropriate rationale. The strategies presented in this plan provide detail on how these objectives can be met.

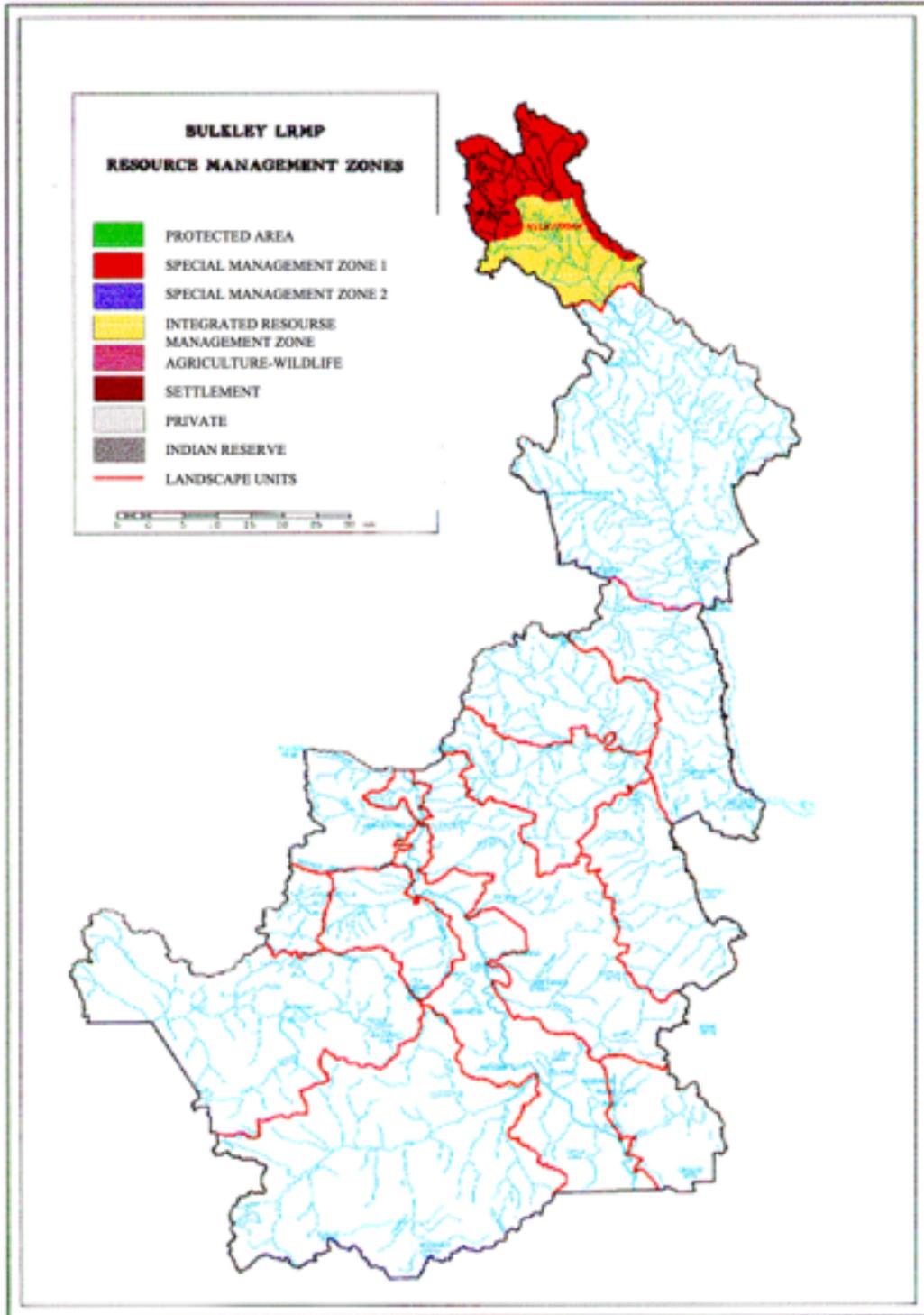
The March, 1996 timber supply analysis of the Bulkley LRMP was a major consideration used in bringing a consensus to the LRMP. The analysis showed that the cumulative timber supply impact resulting from the LRMP management direction was up to approximately 10% for the Bulkley Timber Supply Area (TSA). The impacts summarized in this analysis were considered closely when establishing the following landscape unit objectives. Where objectives were established to meet a special management intent and where this caused greater impact to the timber supply in one area, objectives were modified elsewhere in the plan to lighten timber supply impacts, always with the goal of maintaining the 10% (“LRMP budget”) accepted timber supply impact. In the future, when new objectives and/or additional resource constraints are incorporated into the LUP, the LRMP budget will be considered and the goal will be to attempt to keep cumulative impacts to less than 10% for the Bulkley TSA.

The Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit was assigned a high biodiversity emphasis based on analysis of timber, biodiversity, recreation, mining values and LRMP zonation.

5

All maps shown in this document will be available at 1:50,000 scale on paper and in digital form from the Bulkley/Cassiar Forest District Office.

Map 1. Landscape Units in Bulkley Timber Supply Area



The Planning Area

The Nilkitkwa landscape unit covers 44,664 hectares. Twenty-six percent of the the Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit is considered operable and contributes towards 4% of the Bulkley TSA operable landbase. The quality of the timber is considered to be mostly marginal sawlog with some sawlog. Minimal logging and road construction has occurred in this landscape unit as it lies in the uppermost corner of the TSA.

This landscape unit lies within the traditional territory of Gitsxan chief Miluulak, It also falls within Lake Babine Nation chief A Deel Gi Toyh's territory. Currently, there are no settled lands here. Road access has entered the southern portion of the unit, with plans for further development.

This unit is classified as 60% Primitive, 22%, Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM), and 7% Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM) according to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum done in 1998. Primitive class is defined as 8 km or greater from a road or motorized river corridor with generally no evidence of people and a very high degree of naturalness. SPNM is defined as being further than 1 km from a road with very little or no motorized use. There is little evidence of people, minimal site modification, and a very high degree of naturalness in this area. Similarly SPM is defined as further than 1 km from a road, however it may have occasional use by snowmobiles, ATV's, jetboats and mineral exploration that is air accessed.

Recreational opportunities include high quality backpacking in the Shelagyote Range, canoeing and kayaking along the Nilkitkwa River, trails into the icefields of the Sicintine Range, and Hilary Lake (a high alpine lake). As well, a small cabin on Onerka Lake is utilized by a guide/outfitter for fly-in trips.

Important habitat types in the upper Nilkitkwa watershed include numerous wetlands, streamside riparian areas and adjacent upland forests, avalanche chutes, deciduous forest types, and brush complexes. The relative importance of wildlife in this unit is moderate (as compared to other units in the Bulkley Timber Supply Area). Mountain goats can be found in the Sicintine and Bait Ranges. The populations are reported to be stable, although localized declines have occurred as a result of increased access (Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks: BC Environment, January 1995).

Grizzly bears den in the subalpine areas of the mountains and forage in slides. They also use Nilkitkwa River as a travel corridor to the Babine River, which supports a provincially significant population of grizzly bears and black bears. During the summer in the Sub-Boreal Spruce biogeoclimatic zone, grizzlies typically utilize riparian and wet forest throughout their range. Moose use this unit in summer to autumn months. Moose prefer areas of disturbance, particularly within riparian areas and forest habitats in early successional stages.

There are moderate values for spawning, rearing and water quality present. Resident fish are found in the Nilkitkwa River and its tributaries, and in Hilary Lake. Salmonids are

found in the Nilkitkwa River and the lower reaches of its tributaries, and in Onerka Lake, where they spawn and rear.

Virtually all of this landscape unit is underlain by bedrock provincially assessed as having an extremely high potential for hosting economic metal deposits. However, the lack of road access into area has limited mineral exploration activity, which, to date, has focused on alpine areas where bedrock is exposed. Two known mineral occurrences lie within the recently established SM1 zone, reflecting the high mineral and wildlife values of the zone.

On the southeast flank of Shelagyote Peak, extensive exploration work, including diamond drilling, was conducted from the late 1960's to early 1980's, exploring for bulk tonnage, base metal deposits. In the Bait Range, north of Kosine Pass, non-mechanical exploration in the mid-1980's focused on precious and base metal bearing veins. At this time, there are no current mineral tenures in the landscape unit.

Objectives and Strategies

Biodiversity

The Bulkley LRMP is founded on the principles of biodiversity and sustainability. Key to delivering the biodiversity component is the ecosystem network (Objectives 1.1 and 1.2). The ecosystem network provides for old growth retention, protection of the diversity of ecosystems (including rare ecosystems) present in the Babine Landscape Unit, forest interior conditions, and habitat connectivity. The ecosystem network is intended to be flexible and will be modified as new information and inventories become available. The ecosystem network will also accommodate new initiatives such as wildlife habitat areas and sensitive areas. Further direction for biodiversity is accommodated through retaining old growth (Objectives #1.3 and #1.4), varying cutblock sizes (Objective #1.5), managing for a diverse timber landbase (Objective #1.6) and retaining attributes of older forest (Objective #1.7).

Core Ecosystems

Objective # 1.1

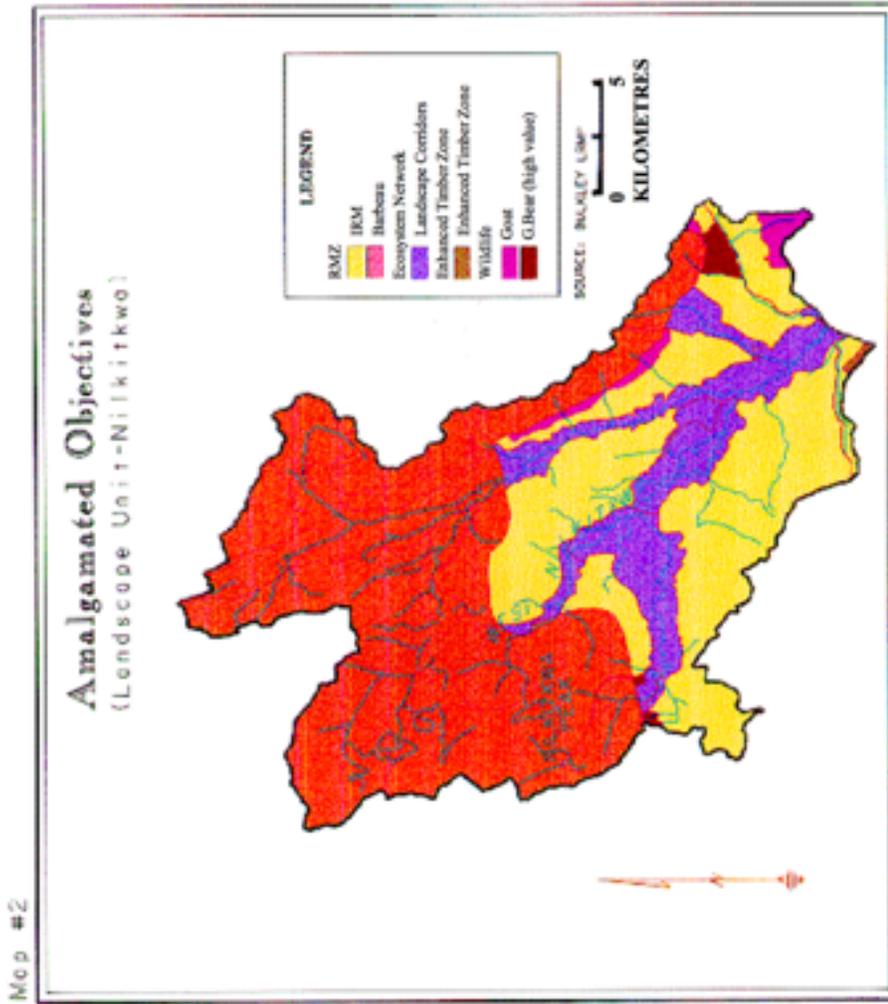
Maintain a representative cross-section of ecosystems, retain representative examples of old seral age classes (age classes 8 and 9), provide some areas with forest interior conditions, and retain representative examples of rare and endangered plant communities within the core areas indicated on Map 2.

Strategies

1. Allow natural processes of insect feeding or disease to occur within core ecosystems unless infestations or infections threaten to spread into areas outside the core ecosystem. If intervention is required, then low impact treatments such as fall and burn or modified harvesting are acceptable.
2. Do not permit harvesting in core ecosystems unless harvesting is necessary for the following reasons:
 - 2.1. to address forest health problems (Figure 1), or
 - 2.2. to permit incidental tree cutting for mining and exploration purposes.
3. If harvesting does occur, no roads can be built (employ long skids or helicopter logging) and modified harvest practices such as single tree selection (to maintain old growth structure) or small openings (<2 hectares to create or maintain early seral conditions) should be utilized (Figure 1).
4. Where alternative access is not possible, roads can be built through a core ecosystem to avoid alienating operable timber outside the core ecosystem.
5. Do not issue new grazing opportunities or boundary changes of existing grazing tenures in core ecosystems.
6. Allow natural processes to occur within core ecosystems, including the natural succession of existing early seral areas.

Figure 1. Decision Matrix for Harvesting in Core Ecosystems

Map 2. Amalgamated Map



Landscape Corridors

Objective # 1.2

Maintain within a managed forest setting, landscape corridors (Map 2) dominated by mature tree cover and containing most of the structure and function associated with old forest for:

- i. providing habitat connectivity within the landscape, and
- ii. permitting movement and dispersal of plant and animal species.

Strategies

1. Operational plans for harvesting within landscape corridors should consider the harvest pattern adjacent to the corridor. For example, clearcuts adjacent to the corridor will constrain harvesting strategies within the corridor. Conversely, modified harvesting adjacent to the corridor will increase the flexibility for harvesting in a corridor (Table 1).
2. Inoperable forested areas within landscape corridors contribute to landscape connectivity. This area will be considered when determining the amount of area to be harvested, and in analyzing the impacts to determine whether harvest plans meet the corridor objectives.
3. Access into landscape corridors should be temporary unless no other alternative is reasonable for ecological or economic reasons.

Table 1. Decision matrix for harvesting options in landscape corridors.

	Timber Type	Maximum Block Size Adjacent to Clear Cuts	Maximum Block Size Adjacent to Partial Cuts	Silviculture System/Mgt. Strategy	Objective	Adjacency
I	Pine (No understory)	1.5 ha. max. 0.3 to 1.5 ha.	3.0 ha. max. 1.5 ha. ave.	Patchcuts or Clearcut with reserve if operationally feasible (i.e., in larger openings)	Artificial Regeneration (Pine major)	No harvest until the block is 50 years old
II	Pine (Bl/Sx Pole size understory of good quality)	1.5 ha. - 3.0 ha. dependent on amount of pole size saplings (5 - 15 cm.)	1.5 ha. - 3.0 ha. dependent on amount of pole size saplings (5 - 15 cm.)	Overstory Removal with reserves where operationally feasible (i.e. in larger openings)	Natural Succession to Spruce/ Balsam stand	No harvest until opening provides sufficient forested attributes.
III	Hemlock Spruce/ Balsam (little or no understory)	Groups 0.3 - 1.5 ha. dependent on the snag component in the stand	3.0 ha. max. 1.5 ha. ave.	Patchcuts or clearcut with reserve if operationally feasible (i.e. in larger openings)	Mainly artificial regeneration Spruce/ Balsam	No harvest until opening provides sufficient forested attributes.
IV	Spruce/ Balsam with good quality varied stand structure	Single Tree or Group selection (0.3 to 1.5 ha.) maintaining approx. 70 % basal area . Single Tree if low snag %. Groups if high snag %.	Single Tree or Group selection (0.3 to 1.5 ha.) maintaining approx. 70 % basal area . Single Tree if low snag %. Groups if high snag %.	Retain approx. 70% of the unit. If the area outside the corridor is a partial cut, flexibility will be considered.	Natural Regeneration Site may be fully stocked after harvest .	Few constraints.

Seral Stage

Objective # 1.3

Achieve representation of ecosystems in old seral condition over time. Apply old seral retention targets as follows:

Table 2. Old Seral Stage Targets⁶

NDT	BEC Subzone	Min Age	% Forested Area
2	ESSFmc	250	>13
3	SBSmc2	140	>16

Strategies

1. Consider old forested areas that are inoperable or in core ecosystems, SM1, or parks as contributing to the old seral targets.
2. Show through analysis or mapping that old seral targets are met following planned forestry activities.

Objective # 1.4

Maintain the natural age class distribution across the landscape unit. Apply mature plus old and early seral retention targets as follows:

Table 3. Mature plus old forest targets

NDT	BEC Subzone	Min. Age	% Forested Area
2	ESSFmc	120	>42
3	SBSmc2	100	>34

Table 4. Early seral targets

NDT	BEC Subzone	Max. Age	% Forested Area
2	ESSFmc	40	<27
3	SBSmc2	40	<40

Strategies

⁶ Reference: B.C. Forest Practices Code Biodiversity Guidebook

1. Consider mature and old forested areas in inoperable, core ecosystems, SM1, or parks as contributing to the mature plus old seral targets.
2. Show through analysis that mature plus old seral targets will be met and that early seral targets will not be exceeded following planned forestry activities.

Patch Size Distribution

Objective # 1.5

Attain a landscape pattern of development that represents the natural disturbance types in the landscape unit.

Strategies

1. Provide a range of opening sizes at the end of a rotation as per Table 5.

Table 5. Percent of forested area by NDT

	Patch Sizes	Patch Sizes	Patch Sizes
	<40 ha	40-80 ha	80+ ha
NDT 2	30-40%	30-40%	20-40%
	<40 ha	40-250 ha	250-1000 ha
NDT 3	10-20%	10-20%	60-80%

2. Target larger (>60 hectares) early seral patches in Enhanced Timber Development areas.
3. The preferred order for achieving large cutblocks (>60 hectares) is:
 - 3.1. to amalgamate existing blocks;
 - 3.2. to enlarge existing cutblocks;
 - 3.3. to create new cutblocks greater than 60 hectares.
4. Retain structural attributes in or adjacent to cutblocks by retaining wildlife tree patches and leave areas. Give consideration to increased retention in larger openings.
5. For larger blocks (>60 hectares), consider a group of blocks within 600 metres and 20 years of each other to be a single patch. For smaller blocks (<40 hectares),

consider a group of blocks within 100 metres and 20 years of each other to be a single patch. These guidelines may vary based on other considerations.

6. Size range of leave areas should be the same as that for adjacent openings.

Coniferous and Deciduous Diversity

Objective # 1.6

Maintain a diversity of coniferous and deciduous species, across the Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit and throughout the rotation, that represents the natural species composition of each biogeoclimatic subzone.

Strategies

1. Site prescriptions should retain advanced regeneration, poles and saplings.
2. Where hemlock and balsam are not planted but are a primary or secondary species, as per the *Establishment to Free Growing Guidebook for the Prince Rupert Forest Region*, facilitate natural regeneration by ensuring these species are a component of wildlife tree patches scattered throughout larger openings.
3. Incremental silviculture activities should ensure that all existing ecologically acceptable species on site will be represented.
4. Where the preharvest stand has a major component (greater than 20%) of deciduous species, retain a portion of these species as either wildlife tree patches and/or reserve patches (wildlife tree patches can include the retention of single trees).
5. Where the preharvest stand had little or no deciduous component, but deciduous species have invaded naturally, design control measures so the presence of deciduous species will not be eliminated from the site while also recognizing that free-growing requirements must be achieved. Preferably, retain deciduous in a clumpy distribution.
6. Do not assist conversion of natural deciduous stands to coniferous species.

Stand Structure

Objective # 1.7

Provide structural diversity within managed stands by retaining attributes of old forests such as coarse woody debris, standing dead trees, and standing live trees.

Strategies

1. Retain wildlife tree patches (WTP) containing suitable wildlife trees at the time of harvest and during silviculture activities. Locate wildlife tree patches to provide a range of old forest stand structural attributes such as standing dead trees, standing live trees, coarse woody debris, and root wads. Patches should be distributed throughout the block with distances between patches (or other suitable leave areas outside the block) not normally exceeding 500 metres.
2. Retain wildlife tree patches with each block, independent of silviculture system, and approximately in the percentages in Table 6

Table 6. Targets for Wildlife Tree Patch retention in cutblocks

BEC Subzone	% of cutblock to be retained as WTP
ESSFmc	1
SBSmc2	5

3. Allow natural processes to occur within wildlife tree patches unless infestations or infections threaten to spread to non-wildlife tree patch areas. Where intervention is required, treatment will retain a diversity of structural attributes or a suitable replacement wildlife tree patch will be located.
4. Where possible, plan wildlife tree patches:
 - 4.1. to retain deciduous as well as coniferous trees,
 - 4.2. to retain some large, old trees,
 - 4.3. to provide connectivity within the cutblock,
 - 4.4. to provide structure in riparian management areas, and
 - 4.5. in areas already constrained.
5. Retention of coarse woody debris outside identified wildlife tree patches, core ecosystems and riparian reserve zones should not exceed utilization standards.

Wildlife

Mountain Goat

Objective # 2.1

Provide for thermal and snow interception cover and forage for wintering goat populations in areas near identified habitat shown on Map 2.

Strategies

1. Spatially and temporally distribute blocks and design blocks so forested connectors are maintained between mountain ranges in Kotsine Pass.
2. Harvesting within 200 metres of identified mountain goat habitat should either mimic small, natural openings (<5 hectares) if clearcut or be harvested with non-clearcut systems.

Objective # 2.2

Provide for security for mountain goat from an unregulated harvest in important mountain goat habitat identified on Map 2.

Strategies

1. Do not locate main haul roads within one km of identified mountain goat habitat or establish an access control point to limit access to this habitat.
2. Restrict access on spur roads to within one km of identified mountain goat habitat by using a deactivation strategy, access control point or temporary roads. Access restrictions must be in place prior to harvesting and after planting.
3. Avoid harvesting within 200 metres of goat habitat from April 15 to July 15 to avoid disturbing goats during the natal time period.

Fish

Fish Habitat

Objective # 3.1

Retain structure within the riparian management zone to reduce the risk of windthrow to the reserve zone. Retain structure within the riparian management zone to provide shade and maintain natural channel and bank stability.

LRMP Special Management Zones

The Bulkley LRMP designated the Barbeau Creek area as a special management zone one (SM1). This designation is to manage the watershed in a primitive state while permitting sensitive mineral exploration and development (see Objective #4.1).

Barbeau Creek

(SM 1, LRMP Zone 1-1)

Objective # 4.1

Maintain the watershed in a primitive state, to protect water quality, goat and grizzly bear habitat, and wilderness recreation opportunities while allowing for continued exploration and development of the mineral potential in the Upper Nilkitkwa SMZ (Map 1).

Strategy

1. Limit tree cutting only to that required for approved mineral exploration and development purposes including access.

Timber

The Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit contains approximately 4% of the Bulkley Timber Supply Area (TSA) contributing landbase. It also has a significant portion of the Marginal Sawlog portion of the landbase, which is an important segment of the partitioned Annual Allowable Cut (AAC).

Timber Supply

Strategies

1. Slow growing, poor quality balsam and hemlock stands on productive sites should be targeted for harvesting and replaced with thrifty growing managed stands.
2. All backlog Not Sufficiently Re-stocked (NSR) areas must be reforested as soon as possible.
3. Prescriptions will encourage a reduction in the time to regenerate harvested areas.

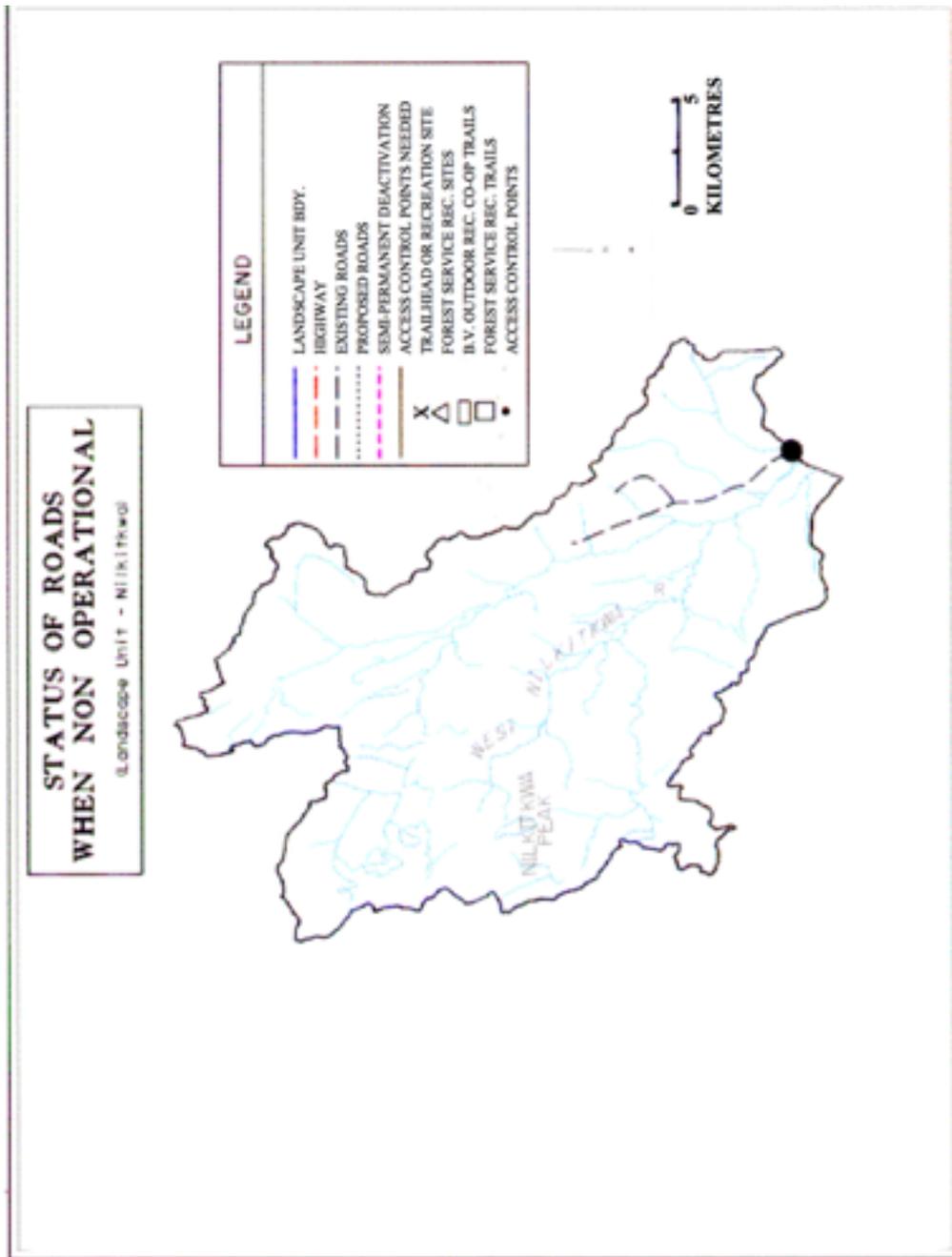
Objective # 5.2

Maintain the health and productivity of the timber resource.

Strategies

1. Salvage of damaged or diseased timber should occur as soon as possible in an economic and efficient manner according to objectives of the area.
2. Identify and use harvesting and silviculture techniques that limit the spread of forest disease and pests which reduce the value and volume of forest stand.
3. Results of annually monitored beetle activity shall be used to identify high priority harvesting blocks in five year development plans.

Map 3. Status of Non-operational Roads



Recreation

The Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit has no recreation objectives.

Visual Quality

The Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit has no visual quality objectives.

Access

Objectives and strategies relating to access can be found in various sections throughout the Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit Plan. Table 7 is a comprehensive list of all objectives and strategies relating to access in the Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit.

Table 7. Objectives and Strategies Relating to Access

SECTION	OBJECTIVE TITLE	OBJECTIVE #	STRATEGIES #'s
Biodiversity	Core Ecosystems	1.1	3,4
Biodiversity	Landscape Corridors	1.2	3
Wildlife	Mountain Goat	2.2	1, 2
LRMP SMZ	Barbeau Creek	4.1	1

Implementation, monitoring and review

Implementation

Compliance with the LRMP

1. The landscape unit plan will be sent to appropriate government agencies to ensure compliance with the Bulkley Land and Resource Management Plan.
2. Future amendments to the plan must take direction from the LRMP.
3. No additional constraints to timber supply will be applied without considering the LRMP budget (see “Introduction” section for explanation of ‘LRMP budget’).

Plan implementation and transition strategy

1. Once approved by the District Manager (DM) of the Bulkley/Cassiar Forest District and the Designated Environment Official (DEO), the plan will be distributed to appropriate stakeholder groups and government agencies (Pacific Inland Resources, Skeena Cellulose Inc., Northwood Pulp and Timber Ltd., First Nations, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Foods, the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and the Ministry of Employment and Investment, Mines Division).
2. Agencies will work with licensees and other resource users on incorporating the guidelines of this plan into operational planning.

Transition strategy

The landscape unit plan establishment process includes a public review and comment period, approval of the plan by the Designated Environment Official, sign off by the District Manager (Ministry of Forests) and filing of the plan with the Regional Manager (Ministry of Forests). The objectives of the landscape unit plan are *legally established* as per the establishment date stated in the *Order to Establish* pages found at the beginning of each landscape unit plan.

The Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act (FPC Act) includes several sections with higher level plan requirements including FPC Act s. 9.1, s.10(1)(d), s.11(c), s.12(b) and (c), s. 13(b) and s.16(b) and under Operational Planning Regulations sections 20, 21, 22 and 23. Table 8 represents a summary of transition requirements for Operational Plans in this landscape unit.

Table 8. Summary of transition requirements for Operational Plans

Stage of approval	Requirement for compliance with the plan
Awarded Timber Sale Licences/ issued Cutting Permits	Exempt (as per OPR s. 22 (1))
Category A-blocks and roads in an approved Development Plan (prior to 4 months after objective has been established)	Exempt (note: with this section of the table the DM is exempting these plans from OPR s. 21(1).)
Non-Category A blocks and roads and other new plans.	Must be in compliance

First Nations

The Bulkley Forest District recognizes that Landscape Unit Planning may be an effective level of planning for addressing many First Nations forest management concerns. At this stage, however, the Landscape Unit objectives and strategies in the Bulkley Forest District do not include First Nations input. These objectives and strategies have been developed strictly to implement the Bulkley LRMP. First Nations have been advised of the LUP process and have been invited to comment on draft Landscape Unit Plans, but have not been actively involved in their development.

This is now changing and there is currently interest in exchanging information between MOF and First Nations at the landscape unit level of planning. It is hoped that recurring forest planning issues can be dealt with at this level to diminish concerns encountered at the Operational Planning level.

The Wet'suwet'en First Nation's traditional territory covers the majority of the Bulkley Timber Supply Area, occupying area in all landscape units except the Babine and Nilkitkwa landscape units. Currently the Bulkley Forest District is working with the Wet'suwet'en on a landscape unit planning project to gather information on Wet'suwet'en historical and current values associated with the land in their traditional territory. Integrating these values into Landscape Unit Plans may result in a future amendment to the Landscape Unit Plans.

Interaction with the Gitksan and Fort Babine First Nations is less involved. Currently they are aware that objectives and strategies are being established and are invited to submit comments. As well, the Gitksan are discussing involvement in landscape unit planning at the Land and Resources working group meetings. The option to add on and amend Landscape Unit Plans to accommodate new information as it becomes available (eg., cultural heritage resource values) remains open.

Monitoring

MOF and MELP commit to best efforts in developing a monitoring strategy for each type of landscape unit objective to determine if the objectives are being met. MELP will be responsible for developing a monitoring methodology for wildlife, biodiversity and fish objectives. MELP and MOF will be responsible for developing a monitoring methodology for the LRMP Special Management Zone objectives and MOF will be responsible for developing the methodology for the timber, recreation, visual quality and range objectives. This monitoring will be done in conjunction with the Interagency Management Committee's (IAMC) strategy for monitoring the Bulkley's LRMP. The Community Resources Board (CRB) is expected to be an active participant in the monitoring and amendment phases.

In the interim it is recognized that monitoring, in a more simple sense, will be ongoing, and that issues may arise at any time that may warrant revisiting these objectives.

Plan review and amendment

This landscape unit plan will be amended as required to reflect new information from monitoring and experience from operational plans as landscape unit objectives and strategies are implemented. Amendments may be required to incorporate new information (e.g. inventories, details for single species management), lake classification, First Nations interests, watershed assessments, etc. Amendments may also be required to provide further detail in strategies to meet objectives. Future amendments of the landscape unit plans will include the details of the monitoring strategies once they are developed. Amendments will be completed as per the Forest Practices Code and Higher Level Plan procedures.

The District Manager will consider amending the boundary of ETD areas if other objectives or values have a significant impact. Possible reasons include significant wildlife use areas and significant impacts due to visual quality objectives. Any such deleted and replacement areas will be itemized and submitted with operational plans for tracking purposes .

Ecosystem network amendments will be by joint agreement between the district manager and the MELP district biologist. For example, amendments to the ecosystem network may be necessary when:

1. more specific ecological information about an area is acquired,
2. rare and endangered species habitat is identified but not already well represented by the ecosystem network (Appendix I)
3. mine exploration or development affects the existing core ecosystem objectives and attributes,
4. monitoring indicates a need for a boundary change.

Changes to the ecosystem network will include an appropriate transition strategy and impact on a licensee's operating area.

A future amendment will be required to incorporate the results from the work with the Wet'suwet'en and other First Nations. As well, a complete review of the objectives will occur within 3 years of the establishment date. An interagency team (including affected Licensees) will be assembled to review the plan, to review the results of monitoring these objectives and to recommend improvements.

Appendices

Appendix I. Red and Blue Listed Species Likely in the Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit

Common Name	BEC Site series	Provincial Rank
Subalpine Fir/Lodgepole Pine - Juniper - Lichen	ESSFmc/02	Blue
Subalpine Fir - Huckleberry - Crowberry	ESSFmc/03	Blue
Black Spruce/Lodgepole Pine - Feathermoss	SBSmc2/03	Blue
Black Cottonwood - Hybrid White Spruce - red osier dogwood - prickly rose floodplains	SBSmc2	<i>Blue</i>
Mesic (montane) forb meadows - variable spp. Composition	all interir zones except AT	RED (Blue) ⁷

Appendix II. Ecosystem Network Summary of the Nilkitkwa Landscape Unit

Core Ecosystems

Location	Area (ha)	Rational	Biophysical	Species	Age Class	NP Description	Comment
Onerka Lk	725	EFm	Balsam	9	Swamp		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - headwaters to Nilkitkwa R. - high fishery values
W. Nilkitkwa Headwaters	900	FP/EFm	Balsam	8	Alpine		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - headwaters to West Nilkitkwa

Landscape Riparian Corridors

Location	Rationale
Nilkitkwa River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - connectivity along Nilkitkwa drainage - increased stream side protection along a high value river
Barbeau Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - connectivity between Nilkitkwa River and Sicintine Range
Kotsine Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - connectivity from Nilkitkwa River to Bait Range - retains mature forest through forested pass in the Bait Range - includes high elevation meadows
Mero Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - connectivity from West Nilkitkwa to Sicintine Range - high fishery values
West Nilkitkwa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - connectivity from Nilkitkwa River to core in Sicintine Range (West Nilkitkwa Headwaters).

Appendix III. Acronyms

AAC	allowable annual cut
BEC	Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification
CORE	Commission on Resources and Environment
FENs	forest ecosystem networks
LRMP	Land and Resource Management Plan
MELP	Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks
MOF	Ministry of Forests
NDT	natural disturbance type
OGMAs	old growth management area
RMZ	resource management zone
VQO	visual quality objective

Natural disturbance types described in this report:

NDT1	Ecosystems with rare stand-initiating events
NDT2	Ecosystems with infrequent stand-initiating events
NDT3	Ecosystems with frequent stand-initiating events
NDT5	Alpine tundra and subalpine parkland

Appendix IV. Glossary of Resource Planning Terms

age class

An interval into which the age range of trees, forest, stands or forest types is divided for classification. Forest inventories commonly group trees into 20-year age increments up to age 140 years, then a single class for trees between 141 and 250 years old, and a single class for those older than 250 years.

biodiversity (biological diversity)

The diversity of plants, animals and other living organisms in all their forms and levels of organization, including genes, species, ecosystems, and the evolutionary and functional processes that link them.

biogeoclimatic ecosystem classification (BEC)

A hierarchical classification scheme having three levels of integration: regional, local and chronological; and combining climatic, vegetation and site factors.

biogeoclimatic zone

A geographic area with a broadly homogenous macroclimate. Each zone is named after one or more of the dominant climax species of the ecosystems in the zone, and a geographic or climatic modifier (e.g. Interior Douglas Fir). British Columbia has 14 biogeoclimatic zones.

blue-listed species

Sensitive or vulnerable species as identified by the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks. Blue-listed species are considered to be vulnerable and “at risk” but not yet endangered or threatened. Populations of these species may not be declining but their habitat or other requirements are such that they are sensitive to disturbance. The blue list also includes species that are generally suspected of being vulnerable, but for which information is too limited to allow designation in another category.

coarse woody debris

Sound and rotting logs and stumps that provide habitat for fungi, plants, animals and insects and their predators, and that provide a source of nutrients for soil development. Material generally greater than eight to ten centimetres in diameter.

connectivity

A qualitative term describing the degree to which late-successional ecosystems are linked to one another to form an interconnected network. The degree of interconnectedness and the characteristics of the links vary in natural landscapes based on topography and natural disturbance regime. Breakage of these links results in fragmentation.

cultural heritage resource

For the purposes of the *Forest Act*, a cultural heritage resource is an object, site, or the location of a traditional societal practice that is of historical, cultural or archaeological significance to the province, a community or an aboriginal people. Cultural heritage resources include archaeological sites, structural features, heritage landscape features, and traditional use sites.

cutblock

Defined in the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* as a specific area of land identified on a forest development plan, or in a license to cut, road permit, or Christmas tree permit, within which timber is to be or has been harvested.

ecosystem

A functional unit consisting of all the living organisms (plants, animals and microbes) in a given area, and all the non-living physical and chemical factors of their environment linked together through nutrient cycling and energy flow. An ecosystem can be of any size - a log, pond, field, forest or the earth's biosphere - but it always functions as a whole unit. Ecosystems are commonly described according to the major type of vegetation, for example, forest ecosystem, or range ecosystems.

forest development plan (FDP)

An operational plan, guided by the principles of integrated resource management, which details the logistics of timber development, usually over a period of five years. Methods, schedules and responsibilities for accessing, harvesting, renewing and protecting forest resources are set out to enable site-specific operations to proceed.

forest ecosystem network (FEN)

A zone that serves to maintain or restore the natural connectivity within an area.

forest interior conditions

Conditions achieved at a point where edge effects no longer influence environmental conditions within a patch of forest. For interior B.C. forests, the edge effect is generally felt for a distance equivalent to 100-200 metres into the stand. The conditions changed usually involve light intensity, temperature, wind, relative humidity and snow accumulation and melt.

forest resources

Defined in the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* as resources and values associated with forests and range including, without limitation, timber, water, wildlife, fisheries, recreation, botanical forest products, forage, and biological diversity.

guidebooks

Guidebooks are sets of guidelines and recommendations on how to best achieve requirements of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*. The guidebooks are not legally enforceable. However, specifications and procedures recommended by the guidebooks may be incorporated into plans, prescriptions and contracts, in which case those specifications and procedures may become legally enforceable.

identified wildlife

Defined in the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act Operational Planning Regulation* as those species at risk that the Deputy Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks or a person authorized by that Deputy Minister, and the Chief Forester, agree will be managed through a higher level plan, wildlife habitat area or general wildlife measure.

inoperable areas

Defined in the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* as areas unavailable for harvest for terrain-related or economic reasons. Characteristics used in defining inoperability include slope, topography (e.g. the presence of gullies or exposed rock), difficulty of road access, soil stability, elevation and timber quality. Operability can change over time as a function of changing harvesting technology and economics.

land and resource management plan (LRMP)

An integrated sub-regional consensus-based process requiring public participation that produces a land and resource management plan for review and approval by government. The plan establishes direction for land use and specifies broad resource management objectives and strategies.

landscape unit

Planning areas established under the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* by the District Manager, that are up to 100 000 hectares in size and are based on topographic or geographic features such as a watershed or series of watersheds.

natural disturbance types (NDTs)

A term used to characterize areas with different natural disturbance regimes. Five natural disturbance types are recognized as occurring in B.C.:

- NDT1 Ecosystems with rare stand-initiating events
- NDT2 Ecosystems with infrequent stand-initiating events
- NDT3 Ecosystems with frequent stand-initiating events
- NDT4 Ecosystems with frequent stand-maintaining fires
- NDT5 Alpine Tundra and Sub-Alpine Parkland ecosystems

Northwest Weed Committee

Members include: Ministry of Forests, Ministry of Environment, BC Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Foods, Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides, Bulkley-Nechako Regional District, Canadian National Railway, and Bulkley Valley Cattlemen’s Association.

old growth management area (OGMA)

Defined in the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* Operational Planning Regulation as an area established under a higher level plan which contains or is managed to replace structural old growth attributes.

operable forest

That portion of the production forest that, under current market conditions, can be harvested at a profit.

operational plan

The *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* states that within the context of area-specific management guidelines, operational plans detail the logistics for development. Methods, schedules, and responsibilities for accessing, harvesting, renewing and protecting the resource are set out to enable site-specific operations to proceed. Operational plans include forest development plans, access management plans, range use plans, silviculture prescriptions, and stand management prescriptions.

patch

A stand of similar-aged forest that differs in age from adjacent patches by more than 20 years. When using the term patch in designing landscape patterns, it refers to the size of either natural disturbance openings which lead to even-aged forests or those openings created by cutblocks.

protected area

A designation of areas of land and water set aside to protect natural heritage, cultural heritage or recreational values (may include national park, provincial park or ecological reserve designations).

range use plan

An operational plan that describes the range and livestock management measures that will be implemented to ensure that range resources are protected and that the management objectives for other identified resource values are achieved.

rare ecosystem

Plant communities listed as red or blue with the B.C. Conservation Data Centre.

red-listed species

Threatened or endangered species as identified by the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks. The taxa on the red list are either extirpated, endangered or threatened or are being considered for such status. Any indigenous taxon (species or sub-species) threatened with imminent extinction or extirpation throughout all or a significant portion of its range in British Columbia is endangered. Threatened taxa are those indigenous species or sub-species that are likely to become endangered in B.C. if conditions are not altered.

regional land use plan

A plan identifying land use strategies at a regional level (e.g., a plan resulting from one of the CORE regional processes).

resource management zone (RMZ) - from regional or sub-regional plan:

A division or zone of the planning area that is distinct from other zones with respect to biophysical characteristics, resource issues or resource management direction. Resource management zones (in land and resource management planning [LRMP] these include settlement, agriculture, high intensity resource development, general resource development, low intensity resource development and protection) may be drawn on a map to describe general management intent. The zones are usually further defined using descriptive objectives and strategies to explain future land use and resource management activities.

riparian area

Areas of land adjacent to wetlands or bodies of water such as swamps, streams, rivers or lakes including both the area dominated by continuous high moisture content and the adjacent upland vegetation that exerts an influence on it.

riparian reserve zone

Defined in the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* Operational Planning Regulation as that portion, if any, of the riparian management area or lakeshore management area located adjacent to a stream, wetland or lake of a width determined in accordance with Part 10 of the regulation.

rotation

The planned number of years between the formation or regeneration of a stand and its final cutting at a specified stage of maturity.

scenic area

Defined in the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* Operational Planning Regulation as any visually sensitive area or scenic landscape identified through a visual landscape inventory or planning process carried out or approved by the District Manager.

sensitive areas

Small areas established under the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* by the District Manager to manage or conserve unique or locally significant resource values.

seral stages

The stages of ecological succession of a plant community, e.g., from young stage to old stage. The characteristic sequence of biotic communities that successively occupy and replace each other by which some components of the physical environment become altered over time.

site series

Sites capable of producing the same late seral or climax plant communities within a biogeoclimatic subzone or variant.

species composition:

The percentage of each recognized tree species comprising the forest type based upon the gross volume or the relative number of stems per hectare or basal area.

stand structure

The distribution of trees in a stand, which can be described by species, vertical or horizontal spatial patterns, size of trees or tree parts, age, or a combination of these.

timber harvesting landbase

Crown land within an area that is currently considered feasible and economic for forest management. Areas 100% constrained to timber harvesting--for example protected areas, riparian reserves or old growth management areas--do not contribute to the timber harvesting landbase.

visual quality objective (VQO)

A resource management objective established by the District Manager or contained in a higher level plan that reflects the desired level of visual quality based on the physical characteristics and social concern for the area. Five categories of VQO are commonly used: preservation, retention, partial retention, modification, and maximum modification (note: another category, “aesthetic”, has been added for this plan).

wildlife trees

Defined in the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act* Operational Planning Regulation as a tree or group of trees that are identified in an operational plan to provide present or future wildlife habitat. A wildlife tree is a standing live or dead tree with special characteristics that provide valuable habitat for the conservation or enhancement of wildlife. Characteristics include large diameter and height for the site.