

Bulkley Valley Community Resources Board

Consensus Guidelines for Development of the Reiseter Creek Special Management Zone

Revised June 14, 2000

Preamble

As per the objectives set out in the Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) for Sub-Unit 5-6 of the Babine Mountains Planning Unit (page 70 of the LRMP), any development must proceed within the primary constraints of protecting water quality and visual quality.

Access

1. There must be no significant increase in logging traffic on the Telkwa High Road. Based on recent patterns of use, the Board recommends log-hauling traffic by major licensees not exceed 50,000 m³ per calendar year. This limit may be exceeded by a margin of up to 20% in occasional years when forest health issues or unusual operational circumstances result in a requirement for additional haulage volumes. As the Telkwa High Road is not a Forest Service Road, the Ministry of Highways must address the need for dust control, more pullouts and better maintenance. Logging traffic will be scheduled with community safety in mind, with an emphasis on avoiding school bus hours of operation. The Board notes community concerns regarding safety on the Telkwa High Road and urges responsible government ministries to work with the public to address these concerns (i.e. speed limits, road upgrades).
2. Use existing roads and travel patterns as much as possible; i.e., loaded logging traffic would go to the highway via Moricetown. Access via Duckwing Lake, hooking up to the Blunt Forest Service Road, should be assessed, but negative aspects include disturbed wildlife habitat, the need to expropriate private land, loop access and unfavourable grades. Any access to the Special Management Zone (SMZ) should be via Meed Creek Forest Service road.
3. Within the SMZ, roads are to be built with minimal impact on water quality; "best management practices" are to be used for erosion control and sediment control. All road rights of way and running surfaces should be as narrow as reasonably possible, keeping in mind safety, construction and environmental constraints.
4. Road access into the Special Management Area is to be controlled (i.e., gating) for safety reasons, to minimize impacts on wildlife and to restrict access to the Babine Mountains Provincial Park.

Water Quality

5. Establish a water quality monitoring program in the year 2000 to determine baseline conditions and to monitor water quality during forest development. A water quality monitoring program should be developed in consultation with Environment and Fisheries officials. Logging activities must not result in changes in water quality beyond the natural range in baseline measurements.

6. Appropriate riparian protection and management guidelines need to be developed and implemented. It is recommended that all streams, including ephemeral and intermittent streams, shown on a 1:20,000 TRIM map have, at a minimum, a 20 m Riparian Reserve Zone and a 20 m Riparian Management Zone on each side of the stream. The reserve zone designation may be partially relaxed for forest health concerns; for example, individual beetle-infested trees may be harvested within the reserve zone.

7. Stabilize and revegetate all exposed mineral soil surfaces by the first spring or fall following harvest. Deactivate all landings and roads not in active use and revegetate all unused landings.

Visual Quality

8. At the stand level, retain as much advanced regeneration (of reasonable quality), non-merchantable timber and hardwoods as possible, both throughout the block and in patches. Regenerate with mixed species (including hardwoods where appropriate), both in clusters or patches and randomly intermixed.

9. Cutblock layout should approximate natural disturbances or meadows, with rounded, sinuous edges, and wildlife tree patches, integrated with a network of riparian buffers which will also reduce visual impacts. For example, mimic the pattern of the "Moose Meadows" in NE Driftwood, visible from across the valley.

10. Aggregate cutting activities where possible (with due consideration to forest health needs), to reduce road development and edge effects in the uncut forest. Mimic natural patterns of landscape disturbance and succession as much as possible.

Rate of Cut

11. Harvesting within the Landscape Corridor should follow the existing direction in the Reiseter Landscape Unit Plan, i.e., no more than 30% of the corridor can be cut, in small patches, in an 80 year period.

12. The rate of cut for the SMZ outside the Landscape Corridor should be based on an effective rotation age of 180 years. In addition, no more than 5% of the Timber Harvesting Land Base (THLB) can be harvested in a 5-year period. To meet visual and hydrological objectives, the 5 m rule for adjacency green-up shall apply, i.e., stands next to existing cutblocks may not be harvested until the regeneration or forest cover in those cutblocks averages at least 5 m in height.

13. Calculation of the THLB must exclude areas professionally assessed as:

- alpine and wetland areas;
- non-productive forest land;
- brush and deciduous-leading stands;
- unstable terrain (class V);
- having very high surface erosion potential; or
- requiring riparian reserves (as per Guideline 6).

14. Trees harvested in conjunction with road-building activities and beetle management shall be counted as part of the allowable cut.

15. The Board is in agreement with plans to harvest approximately 72 ha in the SMZ in the fall of 2000 for bark beetle control purposes only, with the use of helicopters to remove timber. In each 5-year period thereafter (starting in 2001), harvesting should be planned so that a maximum of 5% of the THLB is cut within a 5-year period. It will be permissible to exceed this limit to a maximum of 20% per 5-year period to deal with issues of forest health by utilising small cut-and-remove patches in beetle infested areas. If the 5% per 5-year period is exceeded, any additional harvest must be deducted from future periods so that in any 15 year period, no greater than 15% of the THLB is harvested.

16. The Board is aware that due to road building requirements, it may be difficult to harvest the planned 5% of the THLB in the first 5-year period starting in 2001. To avoid potential problems associated with any weather and time constraints, the board recommends that any harvesting allotment which cannot take place in the first 5-year period be allowed to take place in the second 5-year period, to a maximum of 50% of the allowable volume.

Monitoring

17. These recommendations outline a slow and cautious approach to the development of the Reiseter SMZ. In order to assess whether the objectives of maintaining water and visual quality are met, the Board recommends that a review of the development of this zone occur at regular 5-year intervals, including on-site inspections by the Board, starting in the year 2005 (before the second 5-year period mentioned in Guideline 15). As a result of this review, the Board may make changes to these guidelines.

18. The Board may request an annual report detailing development activities in the Special Management Zone (such as the extent of beetle infestation, hectares harvested, kilometres of road constructed, volume of wood hauled, etc.), as well as the results of water quality and other monitoring activities.