

Chief Forester’s Guidance on Coarse Woody Debris Management Wildfire Mitigation Treatments

Coarse Woody Debris Management

B.C. is producing a higher diversity of forest products than ever before, including value-added wood and bioenergy products. Coarse woody debris is often seen as source material for new products. Regardless of the end-products from a stand, we encourage Forest Professionals to actively consider and plan for Coarse Woody Debris (CWD) prior to conducting harvesting/ treatments operations.

The following bullets should be considered in the management of CWD:

- Larger pieces of CWD provide ecological functions that differ from smaller pieces.
- Maintaining the CWD already on the site pre-harvest will likely provide the more decayed component.
- Lower amounts of CWD are more appropriate where fire hazard rating is high. Fuel loading resulting from logging debris is a concern where the fire hazard rating is high and areas in/next to the wildland urban interface. These areas are not likely candidates for high levels of CWD.
- There are many ways to determine appropriate amounts of CWD to retain during harvest. For example, consider the amount of wood on the ground:
 - prior to harvest/ treatment, and,
 - in similar mature ecosystems.
- For the purposes of this guidance, large CWD is defined as pieces >20 cm in diameter and >10 m in length to encourage leaving undamaged such long pieces that are present on the ground pre-harvest
- In areas of low CWD candidate, the treatment is leaving standing trees to serve as future CWD.
- The Chief Forester’s guidance speaks to this table as the minimum but in fuel treatment areas it would serve as a maximum (based on bullet #3), given that there are still trees on site to form future CWD.

Biogeoclimatic zones & subzones	Harvest area median (big CWD pieces per hectare):
BWBSmw	11
CWHds-ds-mm-ms	23
CWHvh-vm-wh-ws	23
CWHxm	11
ESSF	18
ICH	19
IDF	4
MS	4
SBPSdc-mc-mk	2
SBPSxc	2
SBSdh-dk-dw	5
SBSmc-mk-mw-vk-wk	6

See the full guidance document at:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/wildlife/wildlife-habitats/wildlife-tree-committee/wildlife-tree-guidance-policies>