

# PLANNING

## Highlighting planning aspects of the Forest Practices Code

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in consultation with the Resource Stewardship Branch (B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks)

### Release of *Landscape Unit Planning Guide* seen as important step to maintaining landscape biodiversity

A new Forest Practices Code technical manual has been released—providing direction and advice to planning staff on managing important aspects of biodiversity through landscape unit planning. *Landscape Unit Planning Guide* is an important step in meeting government's commitment, made when the Forest Practices Code was first introduced, to maintain landscape biodiversity. The *Guide* describes a balanced approach that addresses priority biodiversity factors while minimizing impact on timber harvesting levels.

Landscape units are resource planning areas, typically between 10,000 and 100,000 hectares in size. Objectives for landscape units are one type of higher level plan under the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*.

Landscape unit planning will complement biodiversity conservation measures being delivered through the Protected Areas Strategy, riparian management, Identified Wildlife Management Strategy and other initiatives.

"Implementation of the guidelines will begin as soon as government, industry and stakeholder training is completed this spring," reports Bruce Sieffert, MoF's manager of strategic planning and policy (250-387-8787, [bruce.sieffert@gems7.gov.bc.ca](mailto:bruce.sieffert@gems7.gov.bc.ca)).

First priorities are establishing objectives for old growth management areas (OGMAs) and retention of wildlife trees (WTR). The target for completion of legal objectives for OGMAs and WTR across all landscape units in the province

is early 2002.

Objectives and strategies for other biodiversity values (such as landscape connectivity, seral stage distribution, species composition, and temporal and spatial distribution of cut-blocks) may be established where ministers have approved higher level plan objectives dealing with these values. As well, the *Guide* gives direction on possible development of draft objectives for these values, for testing with licensees over a limited time period.

*Landscape Unit Planning Guide* includes key information from the *Biodiversity Guidebook*. Parts of the *Guidebook* are now outdated, so where the two publications differ, the direction in the *Guide* prevails.

The *Guide* is designed so that implementation will be within the provincial timber supply impact limits set by government: 4.1 per cent in the short term and 4.3 per cent in the long term.

Representatives from forest industry associations, BC Environmental Network and Sierra Legal Defence Fund reviewed and commented on draft versions of the *Guide*. Some of these stakeholders have joined MoF and MELP staff to form an implementation advisory committee chaired by the chief forester. The public and stakeholders will have opportunities to review and comment on landscape unit plans as they are developed by MELP and MoF field staff.

*Landscape Unit Planning Guide* may be viewed at [www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/planning/lup/index.htm](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/planning/lup/index.htm).

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Focus this issue:

- landscape unit planning guide
- objectives guide
- SMZs

### About this newsletter

The legal framework for higher level planning under the Forest Practices Code has been established, and implementation details are being developed and refined. This newsletter for government planners highlights pilot projects, workshops, sample products, interpretive tools and other related work. Editorial supervisors are Al Niezen (387-1721) and Allan Lidstone (387-8372); writer is Bruce Batchelor (380-0998).

Suggestions about the content or future articles are welcome. To subscribe (it's free), fax your name and postal address to 250-388-0958 or send an email to [bbatchelor@trafford.com](mailto:bbatchelor@trafford.com)

FOREST PRACTICES  
**CODE**

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## Regulation changes are streamlining and increasing certainty in o

**P**lanners are already noting positive impact from modifications to the Forest Practices Code's Operational Planning Regulation (OPR) introduced early in 1998. Simplified planning processes, which have enabled speedier reviews, together with increased certainty around plan approvals, have helped licensees achieve and maintain fibre flow objectives.

“Clarifying requirements for operational plan consistency with higher level plans and having a clear definition about *consistency* has been quite helpful,” notes Marty Osberg, forest development legislation and policy forester at MoF (387-7795, [marty.osberg@gems9.gov.bc.ca](mailto:marty.osberg@gems9.gov.bc.ca)). “It is now clear that forest development plans (FDP) must be consistent with higher level plans, and silviculture prescriptions must be consistent with FDPs in effect when the prescription is submitted for district manager’s approval. A FDP meets the test of consistency if the activities proposed are *not in material conflict* with a higher level plan that applies to the area. In other words, carrying out the proposed activities will not prevent the higher level plan objective from being achieved.”

Silviculture prescriptions are now simpler since harvesting, rehabilitation and reforestation methods needn’t be spelled out—instead these plans must state clear standards to be achieved and the site conditions that must exist after harvesting and silviculture treatments have been completed.

Another OPR amendment aimed at streamlining planning is dropping the requirement for submitting logging plans for agency approval.

“We expect logging companies will continue to prepare logging plans for their own internal operational management purposes,” notes Osberg. “As well, having their own logging plans is one way of demonstrating due diligence in conducting appropriate operations. Now, though, they don’t need government ap-

proval to amend a logging plan.”

Increased certainty has been a key goal for industry, as companies need to coordinate personnel, equipment, suppliers, markets and financing on a multi-year basis. OPR amendments have introduced a *gated approval process* for cutblocks, Osberg explains.

“When a category A cutblock is included in an approved FDP, it will not be subject to review and approval in future FDP submissions, provided the licensee has completed required site-level assessments,” says Osberg.

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## Objectives writing guide and training materials released

**T**he *Guide to Writing Resource Objectives and Strategies* has been released, representing the culmination of almost a year of workshops, research and consultations involving upwards of 100 planners from government, industry, environmental groups and other stakeholders.

The Objectives Project's intent has been to provide guidance materials for planners, notes Allan Lidstone, senior planning specialist at MoF (387-8372, [allan.lidstone@gems6.gov.bc.ca](mailto:allan.lidstone@gems6.gov.bc.ca)). “We have distributed the printed version to all regional and district offices of MoF and MELP, as well as to other ministries, forest companies and environmental groups. Currently there is a web version viewable in Acrobat PDF format, and within a month the *Guide* will be also available in HTML.”

“To facilitate widespread and early adoption of the *Guide*, we’ve produced training materials and pilot-tested delivery in a workshop setting. The workbook and instructors guide were well received, and required only minor tweaking.”

## operational planning

“We say the gate is *closed* and *latched*—it is a *done deal*.”

However the gate isn't considered *latched*, says Osberg, if those assessments haven't been completed. Until that point, there are some specific circumstances that allow the district manager and designated environmental official to reconsider a previous approval. These conditions, including a new higher level plan being declared or the establishment of a wildlife habitat area, are spelled out in sections 21 of the OPR.

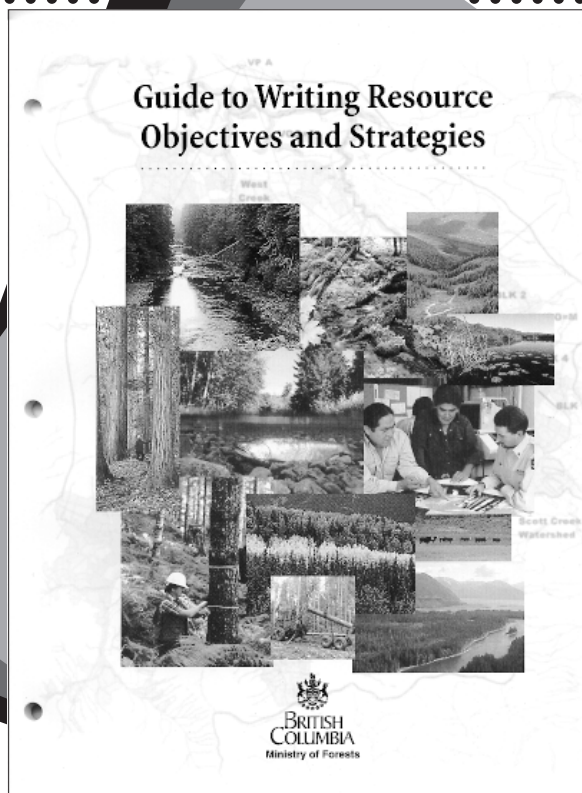
The impact of higher level plan objectives on operational activities has been clarified somewhat through the amendments. For example, section 68 explains how a HLP can set green-up standards which may differ from the default standards. And section 11 clarifies that a HLP may specify a different limit for maximum allowable cutblock sizes that applies to an area or specify conditions that must be met for larger cutblock sizes to be approved.

The *Guide's* purpose is to:

- encourage the preparation of objectives and strategies that are consistently high in quality,
- promote the writing of objectives and strategies that are easy to use and interpret, and
- help make the planning process more efficient.

There are 17 guidelines for writing objectives and strategies. One highlight is Guideline 7 - *Connect with the Issues*. The examples on issues analysis provided in the *Guide* and supplemented by other material in the workbook, have been enthusiastically received by planning practitioners at pilot training workshops. Breaking an issue into symptoms, causes, responses and then corresponding goals, objectives and strategies, emerges as a key approach to successful planning.

“The *Guide* features a full-colour insert which shows how objectives relating to a specific resource value change as the value is dealt with by a series of nested resource plans from broad strategic to detailed site plan,” says Lidstone.



“In addition, there are oblique pictures of the affected landscape, illustrating how the area on the ground changes over time.”

Links to the Internet web version of *Guide to Writing Resource Objectives and Strategies* may be found at [www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/planning/planning.htm](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/planning/planning.htm) and at LUCO's website at [www.luco.gov.bc.ca](http://www.luco.gov.bc.ca).

HLP Policy & Procedures document being revised

As planning experience is gained and Forest Practices Code legislation amended, the policy and procedures directing higher level planning are similarly evolving. Code planners can expect a revised version of *Higher Level Plans: Policy and Procedures* later this year.

“A major revision draft is now being reviewed and revised,” reports MoF Forest Practices Branch's Allan Lidstone. “This draft captures Bill 47 amendments to the Code and recent experience with landscape unit planning, sensitive areas, and other HLPs.”

This version reflects important Code changes, for example, the chief forester is no longer signing off resource management zones (RMZs).

The existing *HLP:P&P* is still valid guidance except for those parts that are inconsistent with the amended legislation. For all topics (amended or not) the legislation prevails.

Look for a web version of *HLP:P&P* at [www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/planning/planning.htm](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/planning/planning.htm) and at [www.luco.gov.bc.ca](http://www.luco.gov.bc.ca).

## Working group established for Special Management Zones—info report and action plan released

Already about 9% of BC (over 8.3 million hectares) have been approved as special management zones [SMZs] by land use plans that are complete. This zoning identifies areas where resource extraction and development is allowed, providing it respects specific directions provided in local strategic land use plans. Government and various stakeholders are now working together to clarify how objectives for these SMZs will be implemented.

“In January 1998, a workshop was held with representatives from the forest industry, oil, gas and mining industries, conservation, recreation and labour organizations, First Nations, and various government agencies,” says Terje Vold (250-356-0960, [terje.vold@gems5.gov.bc.ca](mailto:terje.vold@gems5.gov.bc.ca)) of the Land Use Coordination Office. “Those present initiated an SMZ Action Plan to address concerns and provide a framework for resolving implementation and policy issues related to SMZs.”

The action plan and a *SMZ Information Report* are available on the LUCO web site at: [www.luco.gov.bc.ca](http://www.luco.gov.bc.ca), as well as a news release from the Ministers of Forests and Environment, Lands and Parks. The *SMZ Information Report* includes an inventory of existing SMZs which was coordinated with Jim Cooperman, who wrote *Keeping the Special in Special Management Zones: A Citizens' Guide* (available from BC Spaces for Nature).

As directed by the action plan, a working group has been created to develop advice on SMZ provincial policy issues. The group's members have been drawn from a broad range of interests, and it reports to the deputy ministers of Forests,

Energy and Mines, and Environment, Lands and Parks. The working group will use the broader stakeholder group assembled for the January 1998 workshop as a ‘sounding board’ to develop policy recommendations. The scope of the project explicitly excludes revisiting approved SMZ boundaries or objectives.

“The working group has begun work on three key tasks,” explains Vold, who coordinates the project. The tasks are:

- compile the status of SMZs, building on existing inventory and noting the range of objectives for SMZs, where practices are taking place or envisioned in the short-term (5 years) and identify applicable landscape units;
- explore economic development opportunities in SMZs by reviewing the range of innovative approaches that are being used, looking at real examples and examining existing research and development initiatives that encourage innovative techniques; linking to related economic initiatives; examining safety concerns; and
- address referrals, planning and approvals in SMZs, including examining “results-based” approach to environmental management, information needs to deliver on SMZ objectives, role of public consultation, and links to landscape unit planning.

The SMZ Working Group receives guidance from a government SMZ executive-level committee which includes Derek Thompson (ADM, LUCO), Jim Walker (Special Projects, MELP), and Bronwen Beedle (Deputy Chief Forester, MoF).