

5.5 Timber Management Indicator 4. Harvesting the Full Timber Quality Profile

5.5.1 Background:

From a simplified harvest economics viewpoint there are two stand categories that occur in Bulkley TSA: those that yield a relatively higher proportion of lower value or poor-quality timber (i.e. small piece size; pulp grades), and those that yield a relatively higher proportion of more valuable sawlog-quality timber. Except when there is a peak in pulp commodity prices, harvest focus is often placed on the latter category. Left unmanaged, this situation could result in a deficit of stands of sawlog-quality timber within the next few decades, which would have a destabilizing effect on local mills.

Since the mid-1980's Bulkley MOF and forest licensee staff have worked collaboratively to select forest cover attributes that accurately quantify stand quality. They determined that 59% of the Bulkley TSA stand quality profile was comprised of stands of primarily sawlog quality timber, and 41% of stands of primarily marginal sawlog or pulp quality timber.

In his 1995 Allowable Annual Cut (AAC) determination (and again in his 2001 AAC determination) BC's Chief Forester established a partitioned AAC for Bulkley TSA. Of the total 895 000 m³ AAC (set to 882 000 m³ in 2001), 41% of the harvesting profile (367 000 m³/year prior to 2001; 362 000 m³/year from 2001 to present) was to be from stands of marginal sawlog or pulp quality timber.

District staff were directed to monitor harvest performance in this partition. If performance was inadequate, the landbase associated with this partition could be removed from the timber harvesting landbase (THLB) in a subsequent AAC determination, and the AAC adjusted to a level appropriate to a reduced THLB.

To ensure harvest in the marginal sawlog/pulplog partition, special non-replaceable "opportunity wood" licenses have been established, and existing replaceable license agreements modified. This section summarizes District partition monitoring results for these licenses.

5.5.2 Measure:

Performance with respect to the Chief Forester's partition timber quality profile.

5.5.3 Results and Discussion:

Figure 35 illustrates harvest performance with respect to AAC levels set for the sawlog and the marginal sawlog/pulp partitions, for the years 1995 to 2000. The figure reveals a consistent undercut in the marginal sawlog/pulp-log partition. Harvest in the sawlog partition was closer to target levels.

5.5.4 Recommendations:

The undercut in the marginal sawlog/pulp partition is attributable to poor pulp commodity prices during the period monitored. Because 50% or more of target AAC was

consistently achieved for this partition type, District staff recommended that the associated landbase be kept in the THLB for the Chief Forester's 2001 AAC determination.

5.5.5 Data Sources:

1995-2001 Cut Control Letters, for individual licenses

Bulkley District Partition Tracking database

Figure 35 - Partition Harvesting Rates, 1995-2000

