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## 6.0 Visual Quality

### 6.1 Introduction:

As stated in the Bulkley LRMP, the scenic resources of the Bulkley timber supply area are critical to the viability of the tourism recreation sector and to the quality of life of area residents. Scenic quality is a major factor in recreational use, and forest landscapes provide a scenic backdrop that is highly valued by the public and by the tourism industry.

### **6.2 Visual Quality Indicator 1. Visual Quality of Timber Harvesting**

#### 6.2.1 Background:

Timber harvesting can have a major effect on the quality of the visual landscape. Visual quality objectives for harvesting activities are provided in Landscape Unit Plans (LUP's), for visually sensitive areas as seen from major highway and river corridors, recreation focus points, and specific viewpoints listed in the Bulkley LRMP<sup>1</sup>.

Visual quality objectives (VQO's) are as follows:

- Preservation VQO - forest management activities cannot be visible from designated viewpoints.
- Retention VQO - forest management activities may be discernible but not clearly visible to the average viewer. Disturbances must appear to be from natural causes.
- Partial Retention VQO - forest management activities may be noticeable but must blend well with the natural appearance of the landscape.
- Modification VQO - forest management activities must have natural appearing characteristics, and blend in with existing landforms.

No area-based disturbance targets have been established because visual quality is a subjective value and may be perceived differently by any viewer. Licensees instead must:

- demonstrate that proposed development achieves VQO's, by providing Visual Impact Assessments (i.e. simulation of what the visual landscape will look like post-harvest) from designated viewpoints for public review. Figure 36 provides an example, for a controversial block visible from a viewpoint on Highway 16 near Moricetown;
- manage existing openings to a visually effective greenup height (3 metres in Modification, 5 metres in Partial Retention, Retention and Preservation VQO areas) prior to harvesting areas contiguous to existing openings.

This section reports on current performance towards meeting visual quality objectives.

#### 6.2.2 Measure: Proportion of openings in VQO areas that meet visual quality objectives

6.2.3 Proposed Future Measure: weblink to current views of visually sensitive landscapes, from all identified viewpoints, to facilitate judgement by public as to whether or not objectives are being achieved.

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<sup>1</sup> A weblink to a listing of specific viewpoints is under construction.

#### 6.2.4 Results and Discussion:

Figure 36 depicts areas with Visual Quality Objectives, and illustrates the proportion of openings within those areas that have achieved visually effective greenup.

To date, 100% compliance in meeting VQO objectives has been achieved on harvest proposals submitted since the LRMP came into effect, because licensees have adjusted block boundaries, increased the proportion of reserved stems, or dropped blocks to accommodate government and public concerns expressed during Forest Development Plan review periods.

#### 6.2.5 Data Source:

Bulkley Landscape Unit Plans  
VQO digital coverage  
TSR3 database

Figure 36

