

ZEBALLOS

FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN

Material Accompanying the FSP

But Is Not Part of the FSP

Background Information



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Zeballos FSP Background Information

This Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) includes areas within the Strathcona Timber Supply Area (TSA) and Tree Farm Licence (TFL) 19 and covers a landbase of 58,938 ha. Topography is complex, ranging from wide coastal plains through dissected slopes of morainal and colluvial blankets to steep mountainous formations. Numerous rivers and streams flow through the area supporting anadromous and resident fish populations. Wildlife species such as Roosevelt elk, Columbia black-tailed deer, black bear, and cougar are well represented.

The majority of this FSP operating area lies within the wetter maritime variants of Coastal Western Hemlock biogeoclimatic zone including the CWHvm1, CWHvm2, and CWHvh1 variants. A small portion lies within the Mountain Hemlock biogeoclimatic zone. Annual precipitation levels reach 3,000 to 5,000mm. The climate is characterized by short winters with intermittent wet snowstorms. The summer period from July to September can be dry and hot. The dominant timber species is western hemlock, which occurs mixed with varying amounts of amabilis fir, western red cedar, and Douglas-fir. Lesser amounts of Sitka spruce, yellow cedar, mountain hemlock, and red alder also occur.

There are three communities within the boundaries of this FSP. Support services for these communities as well as the livelihood and stability of families living in the area are primarily dependent on the economic activities surrounding forest management and fishing. These communities include Zeballos, Oclucje (Nuchahtlaht First Nations) and Ehattesaht (Ehattesaht First Nations). Nearby communities include Kyuquot (Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k:tl'es7et'h') and Tahsis.

This Forest Stewardship Plan has a term of five years, commencing on the date of approval of the Plan by the Minister or the Minister's delegate. If the conditions in the Act and the Regulations are met, this plan can be extended for a period not exceeding an additional five years.

1.2 Purpose of an FSP

Unlike its predecessor the Forest Development Plan, a Forest Stewardship Plan is a landscape level plan which is focused on establishing results and strategies for conserving and protecting timber and non-timber resource values during forest management activities. This Forest Stewardship Plan has been prepared to provide direction for forest management practices over a five year term. The FSP states measurable and verifiable results or strategies that must be consistent with legally established objectives set by government for a variety of forest values. This list of values includes soils, visual quality, timber, forage and associated plant communities, water, fish, wildlife, biodiversity, recreation resources resource features and cultural heritage resources. The FSP takes direction from the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan Higher Level Plan Order, the Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA) and the Forest Planning and Practices Regulation (FPPR) and is informed by the Vancouver Island Summary Land use Plan (VISLUP).

The FSP provides a mechanism to exchange information with and collect input from the public, First Nations and government agencies. The approved FSP will be used by government to measure and assess the performance of Licensees operating under that plan. The plan also identifies previously approved areas that are moving forward under transitional provisions from the Forest Practices Code to the Forest and Range Practices Act.

In moving towards a results-based plan, a major consideration for this pilot project has been the question of how to provide effective public assurance that environmental standards are maintained or improved. As mentioned, from a legal perspective the FSP is formatted around results and strategies for objectives that have been enabled by government. When and if enactments are made by the Minister for values identified under section 149 of FRPA the holders of a FSP must prepare results or strategies for the applicable resources value. To be approvable these results or strategies must be consistent with objectives set under the Forest Planning Practices Regulations or as described in Ministerial orders or written notices.

The Zeballos FSP identifies and makes use of measurable results where feasible. Where the desired outcomes are too complex to realistically monitor or physically measure, defining measurable results can be difficult. Often the results become apparent only over an extended period of time. Where there is no consistently reliable means of measurement, strategies are stated and used to help guide operational planning. In all cases operations will be subject to on-going monitoring and evaluation by the public, regulatory agencies and the Forest Practices Board. In some cases individual licensees operating under this plan will also have their own internal auditing and perhaps other environmental management systems aimed at maintaining independent certification.

These results and strategies are referenced or described in section 6 of the FSP. A result or Strategy is defined by regulation as follows:

“result” means a description of

- (a) measurable or verifiable outcomes in respect of a particular established objective, and*
- (b) the situations or circumstances that determine where in a forest development unit the outcomes under paragraph (a) will be applied;*

“strategy” means a description of

- (a) measurable or verifiable steps or practices that will be carried out in respect of a particular established objective, and*
- (b) the situations or circumstances that determine where in a forest development unit the steps or practices will be applied;*

Collateral material accompanying the Zeballos FSP has been developed in support of this FSP. While these documents do not create any legal commitments on the part of licensees they do provide clarity to different aspects of the FSP process. This document is one of those developed. This Background Information document was designed to provide some detail on the purpose and intent of an FSP. As well it provides some background on the licensees involved with the plan and licences on which they operate.

A second document titled Technical Information summarizes details that licensees took into consideration when preparing the FSP. It is designed to assist the delegated decision maker, stakeholders, and the public in understanding different parts of the FSP. Specifically it speaks to transitional provisions from the Code to FRPA as well as the status of blocks and roads which are at various stages of approval under the Forest Practices Code. It also serves to provide background regarding adjustments made to certain objectives as a result of Ministerial targets for the protection of specific values or to identify where conflicts between different objectives exist.

In certain cases it may be required that results and strategies be supported by additional documentation, reports or mapping. A third document titled Information Provided Pursuant to Request from the Minister has been prepared. This material again accompanies the FSP but is not legally part of the FSP. The information contained in this document provides clarification of strategies or results contained in the FSP.

2.0 REVIEW AND COMMENT

Some are concerned that the provisions for public consultation may be eroded, as FRPA does not spell out that public consultation needs to be effective or how to do it. In the realm of the Forest Practices Code and forest development plans, forest licensees were often frustrated by the lack of substantive or meaningful input forthcoming in response to public input processes. Even when it was provided, comment tended to be of a general nature or at a broad scale that would be more appropriately directed at much higher level land use planning and policy setting forums. Individual licensees have relatively little influence here. Another difficulty was that specific comments were provided only very late in the planning process, after licensees had incurred considerable layout cost. At this point making meaningful changes is difficult and costly, causing frustration and dissatisfaction for both licensees and the commenting individual or organization.

The intent of a Forest Stewardship Plan is to focus more on meeting landscape level objectives through results and strategies that serve to guide operational plans. The plan is comprised of Forest Development Units (FDU's) which are geographically referenced units within the FSP area with similar management intent. The FDU's identify areas where timber may be harvested or roads may be constructed during the term of the FSP. The public is being asked to review these legally established results and strategies in the FSP in the context of this landbase and comment on specific areas where they may have concerns. Concerns may be specific to a location or feature within a FDU or may involve management strategies or results for objectives enabled by government and specified in this plan. These comments may help shape certain results or strategies within individual FDU's or they could influence operational considerations to be addressed later during block layout.

Western Forest Products has developed a protocol for what we believe the components of effective consultation could be. It outlines a "pilot" approach to consultation and information gathering with stakeholders including First Nations, local organizations and residents, and others. It focuses on ground-based, specific features and hopefully improves site-level consultation and planning around these features. The review and comment stage of the Zeballos FSP marks the start of the process, and licensee professionals will learn and adapt as the process continues.

With respect to the FSP, formal consultation is normally a 60-day review and comment period beginning with the placement of a notice in a local newspaper. The Licensee is legally obligated to consider any written comments relevant to the plan if they are received during this period. This well defined period for formal review and comment is needed because a licensee will not be able to continue normal operations for very long if the FSP process is not expedited. Without an approved FSP, no new cutting or road permits could be issued.

Licensees are not required to consider comments directed at existing development or previously approved development. This makes sense as the focus of the FSP review and comment process needs to be shifted to concentrate on the future. Comments directed at existing layout and development still may provide the Licensee with useful insights, but in practical terms

licensees will not be able to implement any more than minor adjustments, if at all, to block and road configurations without incurring significant costs and operational disruption. Focusing forward is an opportunity to improve the entire process.

As the term of an FSP is normally five years, there is obviously a long gap between formal opportunities to provide comment. The Licensees recognize that important new or previously unreported information may become available in the ensuing five years and needs to be incorporated into current operational planning and the next FSP. With regard to the latter, consultation during the term of an approved FSP can be thought of as a multi-year, front-end extension of the review and comment period for the next FSP. There is no benefit to delaying comments until the next FSP review and comment period, but a lot to be gained by having the information available earlier. To this end WFP intends to maintain an “open door” with opportunity for ongoing consultation with any stakeholder becoming an ongoing corporate responsibility. This will be supported by an Internet site to receive information about specific resource features that can be linked spatially to maps. As well designated personnel at the Forest Operation will be available to conduct consultations and receive information. Annual reminder notices of these consultation opportunities will be published in local newspapers.

At least with respect to the Zeballos FSP area, current provisions for public review and consultation have seldom provided licensees with timely, specific, spatial, site-level information that can be used to improve operational planning. Likewise stakeholders have not, for any number of reasons, been inclined to participate wholeheartedly. With this FSP, licensees propose to try a new approach where the focus of public consultation and comment shifts to on-the-ground features. To this end Western Forest Products will experiment with a GIS-based stakeholder features registry for providing advance warning of planning conflicts. It is hoped that as the registry grows, the approach will provide more time to explore alternatives and reach solutions, and thus provide higher satisfaction levels for stakeholders and licensees alike.

3.0 APPLICATION OF THIS PLAN

Individual Licensees may choose to develop their own results and strategies to meet certain objectives. In such a case the Licensee would prepare their own Forest Stewardship Plan and Forest Development units for the areas they wish to manage. Although some of the strategies may vary, many of the values set by government are monitored and measured at a landscape level. Landscape objectives will have to be consistent or compatible if multiple FSP’s exist over a local area. The onus is on the Licensees operating in the area to ensure business plans are coordinated so that values and objectives set by government are not compromised. Ideally the management of all resources is accounted for under one plan. Although the FSP only involves two licensees at this time there are opportunities for other licensees to sign on to this plan in the future.

3.1 Western Forest Products Incorporated

Western Forest Products Inc. (WFP) is an integrated forest products company engaged in timber harvesting, sawmilling, value-added lumber manufacturing, and manufacture of Kraft pulp in coastal British Columbia. Currently, Western Forest Products is the second largest coastal woodland operation in British Columbia with a total annual harvest of approximately 4.2 million cubic meters, a perpetual supply of an additional 330,000 to 350,000 cubic meters of sawlogs, a total annual production capacity of over one billion feet of lumber from six sawmills on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland, and capacity for 260,000 ADMT from one pulp mill at Squamish.

Western Forest Products Inc. principal woodlands activities are timber harvesting and forest management. Prior to government tenure expropriations, WFP managed over 850,000 hectares of public and private forest lands in the Queen Charlotte Islands, Vancouver Island, Mid Coast and South Mainland Coast, and held three Tree Farm Licences (6, 19 and 25), various Forest Licences (FL), and Timber Licences (TL). Western Forest Products Inc. has achieved ISO 14001 certification for its Environmental Management System for all woodlands operations, and has obtained Canadian Standards Association certification for its North Island Vancouver Island Region. In 2004, WFP maintained and operated 36 recreation sites in its forest operations, and ran and/or contributed to four volunteer salmon enhancement hatcheries releasing 1.8 million fry annually.

Western Forest Products Inc. was recently formed as a result of the restructuring of Doman Industries in July of 2004. Although licences held under this plan are still in the name of Doman Western Lumber Limited the management responsibilities lie with Western Forest Products Inc. and for the purpose of this plan will be referenced as such.

3.2 Nootka Sound Economic Development Corporation

Nootka Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC) operates within the Strathcona Timber Supply Area. The NSEDC licence is a 15-year non-replaceable forest licence with an Allowable Annual Cut of 35,766 m³. Twenty-five percent of the harvest is to be made available to value-added manufacturers. The NSEDC is administered by a nine-member board representing the communities of Gold River, Tahsis and Zeballos. Through a management contract, Western Forest Products Inc. provides planning, layout and harvesting services.

Harvesting and development for NSEDC occurs with the Strathcona TSA and is generally focused around the communities of Gold River, Tahsis and Zeballos. The NSEDC licence to which this applies may operate under their Forest Licence A53746 in any of the Forest Development Units in the TSA to achieve their allowable harvest.

3.3 Other Licensees

Western Forest Products has been the lead Licensee in the preparation of this plan. This FSP was designed to allow for multiple Licensees to operate under this plan and coordinate efforts in achieving the results and strategies contained herein. Upon review of the terms and conditions of the plan, another Licensee can sign on as a participating Licensee.

In compliance with the Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA) and the Forest Practices, Planning and Practices Regulation (FPPR), WFP has prepared the 2004 Forest Stewardship Plan for what is referred to as the Zeballos FSP. For the area under the plan near Zeballos, these licences are specified in Table 1 of the FSP. The Zeballos FSP only takes in portions of FL A19231 and TFL 19 as specified in the Forest Development Unit section of this plan. The FSP encompasses approximately 50,000 hectares and sustains a crew of 75 to 80 persons including WFP and contract personnel.

4.0 TENURES

The plan area is comprised of a mix of tenures including Tree Farm Licence 19, Timber Licences and the Forest Licences of operators within the Strathcona TSA. An assortment of

Licensees potentially could operate within this planning unit. The Forest Revitalization Act (Bill 28) may increase the number of Licensees involved with the Zeballos area.

4.1 TFL 19

TFL 19 is managed and operated by Western Forest Products Inc. At the time this plan is prepared the allowable annual cut (AAC) for TFL 19 is 894,132 cubic meters per year. The area to which this FSP applies may contribute between 50,000 and 150,000 cubic meters towards the total AAC in any given year.

TFL 19 currently supports volume that is allocated to the British Columbia Timber Sales Program. The management of TFL 19 involves an agreement with the BC Timber Sales program to supply a volume of 45,868 cubic meters per year. An area representative of this annual allowable cut was excluded from TFL 19 during takeback negotiations with the Ministry of Forests and BCTS operations within the TFL are expected to be phased out over the next few years. Residual BCTS cuts from volume allocations to the end of 2004 can occur anywhere within TFL19 upon agreement with Western Forest Products and will depend on the ability of each area to spatially support this added volume. .

4.2 TSA

Strathcona TSA is comprised of volume-based licences that are awarded to various Licensees. There are three different supply blocks within the Strathcona TSA. The Sayward, the Loughborough and the Kyuquot Supply Block are all located within the Strathcona TSA. A portion of the Zeballos FSP is located within the Kyuquot Supply Block. Licences within the TSA are volume based tenures and may or may not be restricted to one operating area over time. Licensees will often move operations around within a TSA over time as dictated by timber and non-timber resources and/or other spatial constraints that influence harvest levels in a particular area. The area within the TSA covered by this FSP has traditionally been on the focus of operations by Western Forest Products, Canfor and to a lesser extent Hecate Logging, Nootka Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC), and the British Columbia Timber Sales Program (BCTS). The NSEDC operation is managed by WFP and this licence will be administered through this plan as well. Due to the infrastructure centered around Zeballos and the proximity of these FDU's the majority of the volume harvest is expected to be by WFP for the foreseeable future. As other plans and allocations of Licensees operating within the Strathcona TSA are addressed the make up of Licensees may change.

4.3 Timber Licences

WFP owns and manages a number of Timber Licences with the TSA and TFL. These are listed in Table 1 of the FSP. As these licences are harvested and once all free growing obligations are met they revert back into the surrounding TSA or TFL tenures.

5.0 FOREST DEVELOPMENT UNITS

Within the Forest Stewardship Plan area there are twelve forest developments units (FDU) being proposed at this time. A forest development unit is an area within a Forest Stewardship Plan where forest practices, including timber harvesting and road construction, could occur at any time during the term of the plan.

The values being measured and monitored by this plan helped to guide the delineation of the units proposed. In many cases these values are measured against the landscape characteristics used to delineate these units. Forest Development Units were developed in

consideration of watershed boundaries, tenure types, and the Vancouver Island Summary Land Use Plan management zone boundaries. The following table presents the type of information considered for each individual FDU.

Table 1: Forest Development Units – Zeballos FSP

F D U	General Location	Area (ha)	Licence	Elevation Range (m)	BEC	VILUP	Major Watershed	Notable Elements
I	Lower Zeballos River	5115.0	TFL 19	0-1100	CWHvm1 CWHvm2 MHmm1	RMZ 16 (Zeballos)	Zeballos River Golden Creek Spud Creek	Town of Zeballos, Ehatesaht Village, various old mine sites.
L	Nomash River	5364.3	TFL 19	100 –1800	CWHvm1 CWHvm2 MHmm1	RMZ 16 (Zeballos)	Nomash River	Various old mine sites
O	Zeballos Lake	4577.5	TFL 19	200-1700	CWHvm1 CWHvm2 MHmm1	SMZ 6 (Woss-Zeballos)	Marauado Creek	Zeballos Lake
X	Upper Zeballos River	4732.8	TFL 19	400-1100	CWHvm1 CWHvm2 MHmm1	RMZ 16 (Zeballos)	Zeballos River	None
Z	Head of Espinosa Inlet	5398.7	TFL 19	0-1000	CWHvm1 CWHvm2 CWHvh1 MHmm1	RMZ 18 (Eliza)	Mahmat Creek Espinosa Creek	Village of Oclucje
h	Little Espinosa/Ehatesaht Creek	6400.0	TSA 37	0-1000	CWHvm1 CWHvm2 CWHvh1 MHmm1	RMZ 18 (Eliza)	Little Espinosa/Ehatesaht Creek	Espinosa village site
k	Chum Creek	1785.2	TSA 37	0-500	CWHvm1 CWHvm2 MHmm1	RMZ 18 (Eliza)	Chum Creek	None
m	Fair Harbour Amai	5161.3	TSA 37	0-800	CWHvm1 CWHvm2 CWHvh1 MHmm1	RMZ 17 (Artlish Kaouk)	Lower Kaouk Soatwoon Creek Ray Creek	Fair Harbour docking facilities
n	Kaouk River	7891.1	TSA 37	0-1100	CWHvm1 CWHvm2 MHmm1	RMZ 17 (Artlish Kaouk)	Kaouk River Rowland Creek	None
o	Upper Artlish	3401.4	TSA 37	0-1100	CWHvm1 CWHvm2 MHmm1	RMZ 17 (Artlish Kaouk)	Artlish River	None
p	Mid Artlish	726.7	TSA 37	0-1000	CWHvm1 CWHvm2 MHmm1	RMZ 16 (Zeballos)	Artlish River Kaouk River	None
a	Main Artlish	7581.6	TSA 37	0-1200	CWHvm1 CWHvm2 CWHvh1 MHmm1	RMZ 17 (Artlish Kaouk)	Artlish River	None

6.0 MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FRPA has established a legal framework under which licensees and the government will interact on the management of timber and non-timber resources. Licensees are clearly obliged to address objectives enabled through legislation. To this extent the government can only approve results or strategies that are consistent with legally established objectives. This has the potential in certain cases to leave the perception that all resources are not being managed for on the landbase. Through review and comment it is anticipated that other resources or features will be identified by the public or First Nations. This may result in additional management considerations for operations to follow up on. Some of these may be outside the context of the FSP and/or may have more applicability to practice requirements under the Forest Planning and Practices Regulation. Important resource information has been gathered from previous correspondence with local interest groups and information received during review and comment of plans advertised under the FPC. Further to this, licensees operating under this plan have set up a protocol for dealing with ongoing public concerns. This information will be used to guide operational activities including planning, layout and correspondence over the term of the plan.

Still, other resource concerns can and will develop over the term of the plan for issues that are beyond the legal context of the FSP. It is expected that professional staff working for respective licensees will deal with each issue in a professional manner and balance timber objectives for that licence with consideration of other resources. To reduce timber supply impacts when accommodating other resources, planners should make use of existing restrictions on the timber harvesting landbase. Such cases may include a resource or feature being incorporated into Wildlife Tree Patches or Riparian Management Areas. Management of non-timber resource ought not to unduly restrict a licensee's ability to exercise its timber harvesting rights within land use zones where timber production is designated as an important resource value.