

**Sts'ailes Natural Resources Inc. Visually and Environmentally Sensitive Harvest
Proposal for Echo Island, Harrison Lake
February 27, 2004**

Overview

Sts'ailes Natural Resources Inc. (Sts'ailes) was awarded Forest Licence A63986 (FL) in June 2001, allowing Sts'ailes to harvest timber within the Fraser Timber Supply Area. The Ministry of Forests (MOF) advertised the FL in 2000, soliciting any suitably qualified candidates to apply. Sts'ailes was selected from a number of applicants and subsequently awarded the FL. The FL is a five-year non-replaceable licence for a total volume of 40,000 m³ to be harvested from constrained areas where non-timber resource values such as visuals take precedence. Echo Island, located on Harrison Lake, was selected in coordination with the MOF for harvesting under the FL. Specifically, the viewshed associated with Harrison Lake, including Echo Island, is designated by the MOF as a visually sensitive scenic area.

Sts'ailes is 100% owned by the Chehalis Indian Band and the FL is managed by Chehalis Forest Products, which is a joint venture between Interpac Resources Ltd. (Interpac) and Sts'ailes. Both Interpac and the Chehalis Indian Band have experience managing forestry licences and associated harvest operations. The Chehalis Indian Band successfully manages their woodlot and sort yard. Interpac conducts full forest management services for a variety of licencees throughout coastal British Columbia including successfully planning visually sensitive cutblocks in scenic areas.

The Forest Development Planning Process

A Forest Development Plan (FDP) was submitted to the MOF May 1, 2003 as the first stage in the planning process for harvesting approvals under the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia* (FPC). The FDP is a broad level forestry plan showing the approximate location of harvest areas and the measures to protect forest resources such as visuals, recreation, fisheries, water, timber, riparian management, wildlife, biological diversity, cultural heritage resources and archaeological sites, and botanical forest products.

Commencing with the submission of the FDP a legislated 60-day review and comment period was initiated to solicit input into the FDP from members of the public and government agencies. Sts'ailes voluntarily extended this period to 90 days to accommodate the Council of the Village of Harrison Hot Springs. Sts'ailes notified the public of the availability of the FDP for review and comment as per the requirements of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act*. Public notification consisted of two notices in the local Agassiz-Harrison Observer newspaper on April 30, 2003 and May 7, 2003 including notice of a public meeting and locations to review the plan. A public viewing was held in the community of Harrison Hot Springs on May 14, 2003 from 12 noon to 9 pm where the FDP and three representatives were available to receive and address comments. The FDP was available for review at the Agassiz Library as well as at the offices of the Chehalis Indian Band, Ministry of Forests, and Interpac Resources Ltd.. The FDP was presented to the village of Harrison Hot Springs at their July 15, 2003 Council meeting.

A finalized FDP, which takes into consideration comments received from government agencies and the public during the review and comment period, was submitted on December 24, 2003 to the Ministry of Forests District Manager for his decision. Currently broad level assessments have been completed for Echo Island. The next stage in the planning process is the completion

of more detailed stand level assessments by professionals including riparian, wildlife, visual, hydrological, terrain stability and archaeological assessments. Following approval of the FDP, further field data will be collected to determine the exact location and design of cutblocks to meet the objectives approved in the FDP including visuals.

Details of Harvest Plans

The proposed harvest areas on Echo Island consist of 3 cutblocks from which up to 40,000m³ of timber may be harvested. This amounts to an actual harvest area of approximately 10% of the area of Echo Island. Cutblock boundaries proposed at this stage indicate the approximate area that timber will be harvested from. Partial cutting is proposed for all cutblocks, including small clearcuts with reserves and the retention of trees either in groups, individually or dispersed uniformly throughout the harvest areas to minimize visual impact and manage for biodiversity. Helicopter logging is the proposed harvest method resulting in a reduced environmental impact. Large buffers are proposed along the entire shoreline of Echo Island. The timber profile to be harvested includes predominately Douglas fir and cedar. Harvesting will occur over approximately 4 months either all at once or over a couple of entries during the next two years. The earliest scheduled harvest start date is mid to late 2004 depending on approvals, timing windows and timber markets.

Measures Taken to Protect Visual, Tourism and Environmental Values

Tourism and the associated visual landscape are important resources in the Harrison Lake area. Subsequently the viewshed associated with Harrison Lake has been identified as a visually sensitive area by the MOF and direction is provided in the MOF's visual landscape inventory on the amount and type of harvesting that can occur on Echo Island. Cutblocks must be designed to blend well into the surrounding landscape to minimize the visual effects of the harvesting. In order to plan for how cutblocks will look following harvesting, visual landscape design models have been digitally generated from contour mapping data and inventoried forest stand types to simulate views of the harvest cutblocks from various viewpoints around Echo Island. These viewpoints are selected from those identified in the Ministry of Forests visual landscape inventory. Based on representative viewpoints, when viewing the Harrison Lake landscape from the city of Harrison Hot Springs and Rockwell drive, over 95% of the landscape will remain visually unchanged following cutblock harvesting.

Sts'ailes has incorporated a number of aspects into this Forest Development Plan to address the high tourism and recreational importance of the Harrison Lake area as follows:

- Partial cutting is proposed for all three cutblocks on Echo Island, including small clearcuts with reserves and the retention of trees either in groups, individually or dispersed uniformly throughout the harvest areas to minimize visual impact and manage for biodiversity.
- Helicopter logging is proposed as the harvest method. The advantages of this method include:
 - Helicopter logging results in a low environmental impact as logs are lifted directly into the air from the cutblocks and subsequently placed into the water before being released. Logs are released into areas contained by boom logs, which minimize any debris from being distributed around the lake.
 - No roads will be built on Echo Island resulting in reduced visual impact, water siltation and erosion.
 - Helicopter logging allows for the most flexibility in visually designing cutblocks.

- Helicopter logging has a speed of harvest advantage, thus minimizing the impact on local resident and tourist users.
- Sts'ailes commits to timing the majority of harvesting activities outside of the high use summer months to minimize the impact on area users.
- To ensure that visuals are protected Sts'ailes has generated preliminary landscape design models and will generate further landscape design models throughout the fieldwork process as actual cutblock boundaries are established on the ground. These models will be used to ensure final cutblock designs meet MOF guidelines.
- During the harvest operations Sts'ailes will monitor timber falling as it progresses to ensure cutblocks are consistent with the final landscape design models.
- Silviculture plans include measures to ensure timely reforestation and visual green-up of cutblocks

Employment and Economic Contributions

One of the government directed objectives for this FL is to maintain and create forestry employment opportunities for First Nations and other residents of communities within the Fraser Timber Supply Area. Over the last two years, Sts'ailes has locally invested a considerable amount of time and money into the planning and management of this FL. In addition to the ongoing planning and management activities, the actual harvesting phase employs approximately 30 people subsequently providing opportunities for local employment. These employment opportunities include jobs for helicopter pilots, tree fallers and riggers, logging supervisors, water sorting, towing and barge operations, timber scalers, sortyard operations, and service related industry positions. Timber harvested will be used to meet another objective of the FL, which is to support local milling with emphasis on the value added manufacturing sector. This will support the maintenance of 8 full time milling and marketing jobs. Reforesting of harvest areas will be completed immediately following harvesting providing further employment opportunities in a variety of silviculture activities.

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