

Beaver Lodge Forest Lands Resource Use Plan

The Spirit and Intent of Beaver Lodge Forest Lands

TOPIC Legacy Protection: The Future of Beaver Lodge Forest Lands.

Defined as the need to ensure that there are mechanisms and plans in place to preserve the spirit and intent of Beaver Lodge Forest Lands in the future.

CONCERNS: That future single interest groups could allow for the erosion of the proposed Beaver Lodge Forest Lands resource use plan

RECOMMENDATIONS: That all the recommendations form the basis of a Beaver Lodge Forest Lands Resource Use Plan. This plan is to provide a blueprint for the future use of Beaver Lodge Forest Lands and a mechanism to ensure that future proposals on Beaver Lodge conform to the spirit and intent of the Beaver Lodge Forest Lands heritage.

If, in the future, there is no Beaver Lodge Forest Lands Committee, the plan will provide a detailed framework for future usage. This plan should be filed with municipal and provincial authorities.

Future proposals must be congruent with the spirit and intent of the Beaver Lodge Forest Lands Resource Use Plan.

Administration of Proposals

Defined as evaluation, acceptance and monitoring of all proposals put forth for the BLFL.

CONCERNS: Conflicts between authorized and unauthorized uses.

RECOMMENDATION: Activities on the BLFL should occur only with the approval of the BLTC. A list of pre-approved activities will be made by the BLTC. Other activities, such as specific research, educational and commercial proposals should be approved by the BLTC on an individual basis.

RATIONALE:

Non-consumptive activities should have freedom of use. Consumptive activities must be sensitive to all other uses. BLFL can only sustain a limited amount of use.

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Follow-up Committee

CONCERN: That a follow-up structure be in place to ensure implementation of the Resource Use Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To establish a follow-up committee to ensure implementation of the Resource Use Plan and to participate in operational planning and to maintain a community stewardship role as a trustee.
2. To identify the follow-up committee as the "Beaver Lodge Trust Committee (BLTC).

Resource Use Plan

CONCERN: That the Beaver Lodge Forest Lands be managed by a public involvement resource use plan that reflects the intent of Bill 52, *Beaver Lodge Trust Lands Renewal Act* (1993).

RECOMMENDATION: That the Ministry of Forests and Range approves before July 1, 1994, this resource use plan for the trust lands that was established in consultation with the public.

Perimeter Development

Defined as: urban, highway, commercial, or industrial in the periphery of BLFL.

CONCERNS: Negative impacts that affect areas within BLFL (i.e., Simms Creek), such as blowdown, road kill of wildlife, water quality, stream hydrology. Fragmentation of habitats.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Any tree cutting done for road rights-of-way or perimeter development be designed with methods to minimize blowdown.
2. Representatives of these interests clarify their intents to the BLTC and incorporate recommendations of the committee.
3. Hydrology assessment should be ongoing during these developments and should complement Environmental Impact Assessment.
4. The Inland Highway design incorporate concerns in 1 3. Roads.
5. All other options be exhausted before Hilchey Road approved through BLFL.

RATIONALE: Perimeter developments have potential for causing major changes within the BLFL and will affect use patterns by people and wildlife.

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The KPA hydrology study identified potential downstream impacts to Simms Creek unless storm water management measures were initiated.

Camping

Defined as dealing with overnight stays and would include tents, RVs, trailers, shelters, structures, etc. by individuals, groups, and businesses.

CONCERNS: Would require clearing of land.

- Problems with fire.
- Garbage, sewage, safety, liability, and other

RECOMMENDATION:

No overnight use, no camping, no organized camping, no commercial camping.

RATIONALE:

Other public/commercial opportunities exist, do not want to compete with the commercial sector. Forest, not a park.

Children's Unstructured Play

Defined as current use of BLFL by children for unstructured play on the subdivision interface. For example; bug catching, exploring, etc.

CONCERNS: Can damage vegetation.

- Litter, pollution.
- Building forts.

RECOMMENDATION: Unstructured play is encouraged as long as no damage to land and no permanent facilities are built. Children's forts are discouraged. Monitor use patterns, not a problem now.

RATIONALE:

Virtually impossible to regulate or control; liability factors; prevent damage to land and vegetation; and is consistent with forest.

Fires

Defined as burning of any kind.

CONCERNS: Risks to forests, wildlife, homes, public and private property, and human life.

RECOMMENDATION:

No fires in BLFL.

Incorporate message in educational/interpretative pamphlets. Controlled burning only as approved by appropriate authorities.

RATIONALE:

Risks of forest/property damage too great for any other option.

Picnicking Areas

Defined as formal areas for eating inside BLFL, such as tables, shelters.

CONCERNS:

- Garbage, wildlife problems (i.e. bears).
- Clearing of land, heavy localized site impacts.
- Vandalism.

RECOMMENDATION:

Development of picnic sites at designated access points as designated by the BLTC to BLFL trails on perimeter only. No formal areas within lands.

RATIONALE:

Many areas exist for picnics now, such as Campbell River waterfront, Elk Falls Park. No mechanism in place for maintenance, cleanup, etc.

Structures

Defined as any thing constructed by humans not naturally inherent to the BLFL but excludes major roads and major bridges.

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CONCERNS:

- Encroachment, damage to vegetation.
- Loss of land base.
- Public safety.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Structures are to be included in an overall plan to be prepared and presented to the steering committee for approval. As a general guide, structures may be built that protect environmental features (i.e. the placement of rocks to protect an eroding stream bank), to permit the viewing of wildlife or that facilitate educational or research activities (i.e. waterfowl screens or canopy walkways). Neighbours bordering along perimeters should be instructed to remove structures and belongings located outside their property lines and on the BLFL. Buildings will not be permitted within the BLFL. Liaise with North Island College for facilities and structures at trailheads.

RATIONALE:

Proximity to college and school sites which will have facilities and security. Discourages vandalism and large group gatherings. Reduces encroachment and loss of land base.

Biodiversity

Defined as the variety of life in all its forms. Biodiversity includes genetic, species, community (ecosystem) diversity and the ecological processes that link them.

CONCERNS:

- Loss of ecosystem functions due to human impacts.
- Fragmentation and isolation of forest ecosystems.

RECOMMENDATION: Biodiversity must be maintained as an integral resource within the BLFL. Linkages among ecosystems within the BLFL as well as with outside areas will be maintained for migration of native populations. Planned activities should be evaluated in terms of maintaining these linkages. Biodiversity concepts will be a component of the educational programs. The enhancement of biodiversity will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

RATIONALE:

Maintaining a full range of ecosystem attributes is a pre-requisite to retention and development of diverse natural populations of flora and fauna. Linkages play a key role in connecting ecosystems by facilitating migration of species.

Ecological Management

Defined as an inventory of the flora and fauna of the BLFL based on ecosystem classification.

CONCERNS: Knowledge of the forest and aquatic ecosystems in BLFL is weak and not well documented. Not enough information to make key decisions (preservation / harvesting)

RECOMMENDATION: Establish a benchmark evaluation of biodiversity attributes and identify critical biodiversity linkages. An urgent priority is to complete an inventory of the ecosystem components within the BLFL. This inventory should serve as a building block for other resource inventories and include location and description of water features, ecosystem types, soil, species, biodiversity and an assessment of the risks to the natural environment.

RATIONALE:

As part of an overall planning function, information is fundamental to decision making and for identifying specific areas for acceptable activities.

Sustainability

Defined as wise use of natural resources today in such a way that opportunities are not compromised for present and future generations.

CONCERNS: Depletion and exploitation of resources and features beyond their carrying capacity.

RECOMMENDATION: Educational and research activities will focus on the development of sustainability of natural resources and features on the BLFL. Activities should demonstrate sustainability by minimizing negative impacts, and respecting other values including recreation, environmental and educational.

RATIONALE:

BLFL is a relatively small forest with many development pressures. People need to be able to see sustainable forest practices.

Water Management (Watershed)

CONCERNS: Aquatic ecosystems within the watershed are a broad issue that overlaps with many other concerns about the integrity of the BLFL such as stream flow and water quality.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Hydrology study precede any further development such as residential within Simms Creek watershed (existing study document is a starting point). A total model needed.
2. That the public living and using lands adjacent to BLFL and inside Simms Creek watershed be informed in the use of environmentally friendly products that may possibly enter the storm drain system and ultimately Simms Creek. FOG has some pamphlets that deal with stream care.
3. Implement storm drain marking program in subdivisions and signage (i.e., "Caution! Salmon at Work"), assistance of FOG required.
4. An information brochure be developed that includes recommendations for stream care and wildlife considerations. Could be distributed through local schools (see recommendation #9 Fisheries Protection and Enhancement).

RATIONALE: The stream ecosystem is a focal point of concern for many committee members for values other than fish and fish habitat.

Educational Access

Defined as the degree of access different users have for educational and research purposes.

CONCERNS: Local users have maximum access degradation of flora and fauna (trampling) litter.

RECOMMENDATION: Access by educational groups should be encouraged and promoted. Uses will be monitored. The BLTC should oversee the development and implementation of an educational program in conjunction with the surrounding institutions.

RATIONALE: Everyone should have maximum opportunities for educational access.

Educational Activities

Defined as organized educational activities such as groups or classes of students.

CONCERNS: Adverse impact to sensitive sites and species.

RECOMMENDATION: Promote a broad range of educational values and activities on the lands. Educational activities should be accommodated in specific areas and be limited to passive use, unless specifically approved by

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the BLTC. Designation of specific areas for educational activities may be permitted.

RATIONALE:

Minimize adverse impact of large groups of students to certain areas. However, it may be desirable to permit some intrusive activities in certain areas (plant collecting, soil pits).

Experimentation in Reforestation

Defined as tests and trials conducted to increase knowledge of forest establishment.

CONCERNS: Loss of knowledge from neglect of past experiments.

RECOMMENDATION: Experimentation in reforestation will be pursued as an integral part of the Resource Use Plan. All phases of silviculture may be provided for in the experimental strategy. Reforestation experiments initiated in the BLFL will be evaluated against original objectives.

RATIONALE:

Experimentation in all areas of forest management is deemed appropriate under the Act. Research related to urban forest use and impacts may be particularly appropriate.

Historical Values

Defined as remnants, artifacts, evidence of past human activities.

CONCERNS: Loss of historical features of significance.

RECOMMENDATION: A review and report of the historical values should be undertaken in conjunction with the CR Museum Society. Provision should be made for display of historical logging practices, aboriginal uses and subsistence forest harvesting in a specific designated area. Specific activities demonstrating historical use may be approved by the BLTC for other areas.

RATIONALE: Past human activity on the BLFL an important educational resource. Users of the lands should have opportunity to view historical activities.

Interpretive Trails

Defined as trails specifically designed for educational and interpretive purposes.

CONCERNS: Maximum educational use be realized.

RECOMMENDATION: Interpretive trails will be included in an overall trails plan to be prepared and approved by the BLTC. In general, they should be designed to connect a variety of ecosystem types and other features having educational value, and to minimize conflicts with other users. Interpretive trails may be closed or restricted if necessary to protect experimental or research projects at the approval of the BLTC.

RATIONALE: Interpretive trails are necessary to inform and educate users and must respect all values.

Research Focus

Defined as the designation of the BLFL for "experimental work in reforestation and forest management" as stated in the *Beaver Lodge Trust Renewal Act*, Bill 52.

CONCERNS: Experimental activities may be forgotten or reduced to tokenism.

RECOMMENDATION: Research activities in the BLFL should focus on reforestation and on topics that are related to a forest adjacent to and used by a growing community. Such topics may include the maintenance of biodiversity and the accommodation and effects of recreational and educational programs and activities.

RATIONALE:

Preservation of the intent of the trust is the responsibility of the resource use plan and the BLTC.

Fisheries Protection and Enhancement

Defined as conservation of fish stocks, protection of habitat, maintenance of good water flow and quality in the Simms Creek Watershed and enhancement of degraded habitat and fish stocks.

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CONCERNS:

- Erosion stabilization at trail and road crossings and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- Interfacing with peripheral/internal development, i.e. Dogwood Street, Inland Highway, residential, college, and schools.
- Refuse, garbage, and additional illegal disposal.
- Over harvest of depressed fish stocks, harassment of spawners.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Ensure trail plan from Recreation Committee and Ministry of Forests and Range adequately addresses stream crossings (i.e. erosion).
2. Fisheries monitoring of Simms Creek, i.e. stream flow, sedimentation, channel complexity and stability, fish counts, habitat quantification (i.e. North Island College (NIC) Programs).
3. Recreational fishing by children, discourage adults, catch and release, single barbless, no baits to minimize mortality of mature fish.
4. Enhancement options be identified with Ministry of Environment, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (FOC) and funding sources be sought.
5. Mitigation procedures be established for unforeseen damage to aquatic habitats.

RATIONALE: High public concern for fish and fish habitat, stream protection and enhancement, opportunity for education research and recreation benefits.

Recreational Fishing

Defined as recreational fishing in Simms' Creek and associated fresh water bodies.

Currently used by children. Entry-level fishery.

CONCERNS: Depletion of fish stocks.

- Streamside damage
- Enforcement.

RECOMMENDATION: To allow the fishery to continue as is, with ongoing monitoring by Fisheries' staff and a regulations review.

RATIONALE: If it was a problem, Fisheries would have regulated it.

Wildlife Management

Defined as maintaining present populations of wildlife and their related habitats and enhancement of wildlife habitats where complementary to the intent of the Trust.

CONCERNS:

- Disturbance on wildlife by people, external/internal developments such as roads, intrusion of dogs, brushing out of wetland and stream buffers
- Presently does not appear to be a major problem but infrastructure within and around the BLFL (i.e. Dogwood, Inland Island Highway) could alter this.
- Road kills, water quality (toxic compound accumulation in food chain).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Prepare a wildlife management plan that includes:
2. on-going monitoring of wildlife populations, use patterns, movement, habitat diversity and critical refuge areas; (b) assessment of wildlife habitats (i.e. wetland, uplands) and opportunities for enhancement; and (c) measures to promote the enjoyment of wildlife viewing with minimal disturbance of wildlife activities.
3. Ensure that pending developments appreciate wildlife values in the BLFL and seek methods to minimize impacts and mitigate damage to wildlife and habitat.

RATIONALE: Maintains intent of trust, education opportunities, passive wildlife viewing, and natural ecosystems (biodiversity) for benefit of today's and future generations.

Wildlife Viewing and Nature Appreciation

Defined as active enjoyment of all wildlife, flora and fauna.

CONCERNS: Off trail damage to vegetation.

- Strong concern expressed regarding signage.
- No signs, facilities or structures within forest except at points of entry.

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RECOMMENDATION: To encourage unstructured general appreciation of flora and fauna, facilitated by trails and guided tours. Signs will be restricted to trails and areas designated by the BLTC.

RATIONALE: Compatible with intent of the BLFL.

N.B. This activity does not include interpretive trails assigned to education sub committee. Concern expressed that not all trails need interpretive signing, more discussion required, needs linkage to education committee, re. interpretation trails.

Hunting

Defined as stalking and tracking of wildlife with intent to kill by legal means during the legal hunting season.

CONCERNS:

- Impact on wildlife (i.e. black-tail deer, non-game species).
- Public safety.

RECOMMENDATION: BLFL be designated a **"NO HUNTING"** area.

RATIONALE: Wildlife should be able to live in BLFL with natural predation only and provide viewing / education opportunity. Note: mortality from vehicle collisions unavoidable.

Timber Harvesting

RECOMMENDATIONS: A key component of management of the BLFL involves education, demonstration and research. All forest harvesting should be oriented to this education, demonstration and research function. Particular emphasis should be placed on environmentally and ecologically sound alternative silviculture systems that will enhance the natural diversity of the BLFL.

Timber harvesting should not be conducted in areas where public safety and protection of sensitive environmental, recreation or research features can not be achieved. Prior to harvesting, a thorough assessment of impacts should be undertaken to ensure that protection of sensitive features can be achieved. Timber harvesting must be conducted in accordance with an approved education, demonstration and research plan prepared for the specific harvesting taking place.

All plans must be recommended by the BLTC and approved by the Ministry of Forests and Range, and the Ministry of Environment.

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A mechanism should be found to keep funds generated from timber harvesting from being directed to consolidated general revenue and directed at the ongoing management of the BLFL.

Timber harvesting in the BLFL must not exceed a sustainable rate established with due regard for all management objectives of the BLFL.

RATIONALE:

- The implications of selection harvesting and uneven-aged stand management requires research. The BLFL represent an opportunity for research.
- There is a need to demonstrate that timber harvesting can be compatible with other resource uses. Zoning is a possible tool for increasing compatibility of uses. The BLFL represents an opportunity for demonstration and education.
- Roads, college and past development will reduce the forest land in the BLFL. Care must be taken to protect sensitive sites and to avoid further fragmentation.

Firewood

RECOMMENDATION: Firewood may be generated as a spin-off of other activities, but should not be encouraged where higher value alternatives exist.

RATIONALE:

Wood that comes from the BLFL should be used for its highest social and economic use. Firewood represents a low value in the content of other management objectives of the BLFL.

Examples of higher uses include on-site milling and use of the wood for amenity construction (which would reduce cost of operating the BLFL and provide an education and demonstration benefit). Sale of sawlogs on the open market would also be preferable.

Gathering

RECOMMENDATION: Gathering of mushrooms, cedar boughs, ferns and other similar forest products should be discouraged in the BLFL.

RATIONALE:

- Gathering of mushrooms, cedar boughs, ferns and similar forest products is likely an existing activity. There are no statistics or information relating to possible impacts.
- Enforcement of a rule or regulation relating to gathering will be difficult.
- There is potential for gathering to impact biodiversity, ecosystem function and the research, demonstration and education function of the BLFL because of its proximity to a growing urban population (through over-use).

Motorized Vehicles

Defined as recreational use of motorized vehicles such as dirt bikes, ATVs, etc. Does not include vehicles used for the maintenance and operations of the BLFL. Does not include motorized wheelchairs (separate topic).

CONCERNS: Safety and liability.

- Noise.
- Adverse impacts to trails and lands.
- Conflicting with other uses.
- Air pollution.

RECOMMENDATION: Not in favour of recreational use of the BLFL trails by motorized vehicles.

RATIONALE: Other areas and opportunities exist. The area may not be sufficient for use over time.

N.B. The sub committee was uncomfortable with eliminating existing use by kids.

Roads

Defined as existing and future roads through BLFL.

CONCERNS: Road construction could have the greatest impact on trails, fish, wildlife, and related habitats in the foreseeable future including:

- adverse environmental impact on hydrology, bank stability, water quality (sedimentation and run off contamination anticipated);
- negative impact on stream and fish stocks and other aquatic species; and
- road kill of wildlife and fragmentation of habitats.

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Any further road construction proposals through BLFL be referred to steering committee.
2. Dogwood Street crossings of the steep gullies in Simms Creek be clear span structures to facilitate fish, wildlife, and people passage and create minimal disturbance of fish and wildlife habitat within and adjacent to the stream.
3. Ongoing environmental impact directly or indirectly caused by defective or inferior construction of roads or crossings be identified and repaired (i.e., inadequate culverts on existing roads that are barriers to fish passage.)
4. Environmental impact assessment be prepared on new proposed roads through BLFL and forwarded to the BLTC.
5. Existing roads like ERT and Airport Main revert to the trust when their present tenure has expired.
6. Road run off from the new roads be directed away from Simms Creek or to prepared wet land treatment areas to remove contaminants.

RATIONALE:

New road construction is acknowledged in the *Beaver Lodge Trust Lands Renewal Act*. Existing roads have past problems associated with fish passage and water quality.

Signage

Defined as signs providing information, direction, interpretation or regulation.

CONCERNS: Visual pollution, too many, too large cost and potential for vandalism.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That a sign program be incorporated into the Trail Plan and submitted to the BLTC.
2. That the focus for signage be at the trail head and/or major access points.
3. That they be discreet and low key.
4. That interpretive signs be kept to educational/interpretive trails where more signs are required.
5. Directional signs inside the forest at points required and identified under the Trail Plan.

RATIONALE:

A certain amount of signs will be required to meet identified objectives; however, too much/many signs can adversely impact other values.

Stream Crossings

Defined as trail or road crossing of streams through BLFL (Simms Creek and tributaries).

CONCERNS:

- Erosion and sedimentation.
- Impact on fisheries and the watershed in general.
- Garbage, illegal dumping.

RECOMMENDATIONS (also see Roads):

1. Trails to have foot bridge crossings as designed by Ministry of Forests and Range and approved by the BLTC.
2. Initiate remedial work at eroded stream crossings, (i.e. bank stabilization).
3. Re-routing of trails to ensure single stream crossing where needed rather than multiple crossings.
4. Stream crossings should avoid environmentally sensitive areas (i.e., spawning areas, erodeable banks).

RATIONALE:

Existing crossings have erosion and stream damage associated with each. Increased use will aggravate this problem.

Trails

Defined as the recreational use on identifiable routes in the BLFL.

CONCERNS: State of existing trails.

- Too many trails.
- Too much use.
- Conflicting uses.
- Damage to trails by use.
- Trails don't form circuits.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. General objective should be to develop a network of trails to complement the BLFL and benefit the community as a whole.
2. The network should interface with existing and planned community trails outside of BLFL.
3. Where possible trails should form loops or circuits.

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4. Trails should be mapped and a brochure produced available at trail head instead of intensive on trail signage.
5. Trails should be open for all acceptable use and not specific to activity.
6. Existing trails should be assessed, and repaired, maintained or relocated as required.
7. New trails must be properly designed and constructed to: minimize adverse environmental impacts.
8. The trail network should incorporate the new lands acquired.
9. A trail plan should be prepared and presented to the BLTC for approval.

Wheelchair Access

Defined as access requirements for the physically challenged.

CONCERNS: That there might be no access for the physically challenged.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Wheelchair accessible trails should be constructed.
2. Investigate linkage to school/college area to take advantage of facilities, i.e. parking, washrooms and emergency facilities.
3. Incorporate into design of facilities and interpretive structures.

RATIONALE:

The Beaver Lodge Forest Lands (BLFL) forest should be accessible to more than the physically fit.