

Fort Nelson Forest District Strategic Salvage Plan

1. Purpose:

The Ministry of Forests objective for the small scale salvage program are:

1. Harvest and utilize small volumes of timber that are dead and/or in danger of being significantly reduced in value, lost or destroyed and would otherwise not be harvested;
2. Reduce the spread of insects and disease and contribute to forest health management;
3. Provide employment and business opportunities for small independent operators and communities;
4. Ensure a cost-effective program that contributes to government revenues;
5. Recognize and meet the government's objectives with respect to coarse woody debris; and
6. Reduce forest fire hazard by reducing the dead and down fuel load.

In Fort Nelson Forest District, to date there has been no incidence of Mountain Pine Beetle attack, so there is no link to the *British Columbia Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan*.

The role of the salvage program within the district is to accommodate requests, mainly from small independent operators, to provide volume for the production of building logs and timbers to construct bridges for both the oil and gas and forest industries.

2. Application and Scope:

This district salvage plan will be reviewed and revised annually (in conjunction with the district service plan) and as circumstances require.

The majority of the licences will be direct award Forestry Licences to Cut with a maximum volume of 2,000 m³ (Small Scale Salvage).

One non-replaceable forest licence (A78356) was awarded to Tsa Cho Timber Ltd. October 1, 2005. This licence has a term of 5 years and a maximum of 90,000 m³ of fire killed trees can be harvested. If there are more catastrophic events, such as a project fire, then another non-replaceable forest licence may be an option.

The attached map shows areas that are targeted for salvage, as they are along major access routes and the volume is in danger of decreasing as a result of a wind, event, fire, or over mature age class of the stand. In most instances, road construction will not be approved for the purposes of salvage, as the road building costs would exceed any profit that may be made from harvesting the affected trees.

The district program will be managed to meet local demand for volume, currently there is a non-replaceable forest licence with an annual allowable cut of 18,000 m³ per year and an estimate of direct award volume of 6,000 m³ (Forestry Licence to Cut)

The stands that will be targeted are:

- NRFL A36978 trees killed by the Coal River Fire of 2004
- Coniferous and deciduous wind throw
- Trees infested by budworm, and/or bark beetle
- Coniferous and deciduous over mature with tops broken
- Coniferous and deciduous jackknifed due to slope stability issues (if safe operations can be conducted on site – Work Safe BC regulations would prevail).

All licences would be awarded on stands that are on unencumbered Crown land, the district accepts both professional and conventional applications. For the conventional applications, district staff will do the electronic submission. All licences will have spatial information captured along with a post harvest report. The activities will be monitored to ensure that the harvest does not result in clear cuts greater than one hectare, this is to avoid district manager obligations to establish a free-growing stand.

3. General Forest Conditions

The Fort Nelson Timber Supply Area (TSA), which covers the same area as the Fort Nelson Forest District, is 9.8 million hectares bordering Alberta to the east, the North West Territories and Yukon to the north, Fort St. John TSA to the south, Mackenzie and Skeena-Stikine TSAs to the west. There is limited access, with mainly winter only roads, which require the creation of ice bridges every year. The access issues can result in stands with forest health issues not being harvested.

Forests in Fort Nelson TSA are part of Canada's legendary boreal forest which is the largest intact forest ecosystem in the world and amounting to more than half the total area of Canada. The boreal forest in Fort Nelson TSA consist of three biogeoclimatic zones including: boreal white and black spruce (the majority of the area), spruce-willow-birch and alpine tundra. The forests in the first two zones listed are susceptible to the majority of forest pests and disease that exist in the north.

The following is an outline of the forest conditions that exist in the Fort Nelson TSA which contribute to merchantable volume loss; thereby making stands eligible for the salvage program:

1. Natural- and human-caused wildfire – fires do sometimes burn through merchantable stands, resulting in potential volume loss,. Recently the wildfires of 2003 and 2004 have occurred in areas that may have been salvaged. The non-

- replaceable forest licence issues to Tsa Cho Logging Ltd in August of 2005 was to salvage volume from area burnt by the Coal River Fire in 2004.
2. Spruce decline – located primarily in the Liard River, LaBiche River, Nelson Forks, Kiwigana River, Kotcho Lake and west of Coal River area. It is not confined to these areas and can be found in pockets throughout the TSA. It is characterized by old spruce forests that have been gradually declining, due mainly to their age. These older trees are easily stressed by biotic and abiotic factors. The decline in some of these stands had been accelerated by repeated defoliation by eastern spruce budworm.
 3. Eastern spruce budworm (*Christoneura fumiferana*) – the budworm had been defoliating white spruce and sub-alpine fir for the past decade. The eastern spruce budworm outbreak was at its worst from 1982 to 2001. From 2001 to 2004 the population decreased substantially; and in 2005 it became very apparent that the population had crashed. In its wake the eastern spruce budworm has weakened many stands, primarily those consisting of white spruce and sub-alpine fir.
 4. Bark beetles: Western balsam (*Dryocoetes confuses*) and spruce (*Dendroctonus refipennis*) – there are stands in the east portion of the TSA that are host to an endemic populations of western balsam and spruce bark beetles.
 5. Forest Tent Caterpillar (*Malacosoma disstria*) – there was incidence of this pest in 1999 and 2000. The tent caterpillar population is endemic in the district, with infestations level that are low to moderate.

4. Strategic Goals

The focus of the salvage program in the Fort Nelson district is to utilize volume damaged by pests, disease and a weather event before significant value is lost. The salvage activities will be directed to the areas where they fulfill the greatest forest management need, and where the stands are accessible by the existing road network.

This plan will be made available to salvage operators, First Nations groups, and the public for comment.

This plan and all salvage harvesting will be consistent with the applicable legislation, provincial, regional and district policies and procedures.

5. District Priorities

Stands available for salvage are prioritized by the following criteria:

1. Stands adjacent to all weather access (roads)
2. Dead, down and/or broken trees
3. Budworm infestation
4. Over mature stands both spruce and aspen leading

5. Site productivity at and over the site indices identified in the *Fort Nelson Timber Supply Area Timber Supply Review Data Package*
6. Areas that need to be harvested to reduce fuel hazard with the objective of protection from wildfire
7. Stands that are adjacent to transmission line rights-of-way that may cause a safety concern or fire hazard.

Priority may be given to areas adjacent to private land, woodlots, highway and settlement corridors, scenic areas fuel management and where other resource values may be at risk.

6. District Objectives For the Use of FLTC's, SNRFL's and CSL's.

The tenure type that would be issued for the majority of the salvage operations in the TSA would be Small Scale Salvage Forestry Licence to Cut (maximum volume of 2,000m³). Most of the applications that come into the district office will be conventional applications (there are no local service providers, so it is not anticipated that any professional applications would be submitted).¹ With the conventional applications, district staff will provide the electronic submission, spatial data and post harvest report.

All harvesting activities that will occur within the Coal River Fire area will be through cutting and road permits issued under NRFL A78356.

7. Roads

No new roads will be authorized to be built for access to small scale salvage stands.

The salvage operator will need to enter into a road use agreement with the holder of a road permit, if use of the road is required to access the stand to be salvaged.

8. Implementation

Application forms for Forestry Licence to Cut can be obtained from the Fort Nelson Forest District Office, or can be accessed on the internet at <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hth/timten/small-scale-salvage.htm>.

For more information on the Fort Nelson forest District please visit our website at:
<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/dfn/>

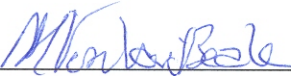
9. Future Considerations

Currently, it is not anticipated that there would be much change in the program for the Fort Nelson TSA.

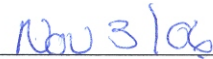
10. Contact

For more information regarding the salvage program in the Fort Nelson TSA contact:
Mary Vizlai-Beale, RPF, Tenures Officer or Jeanine Hudson, Tenures Technician at
250 774-5511.

Prepared by:




Mary Vizlai-Beale, RPF
Tenures Officer

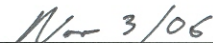


Date

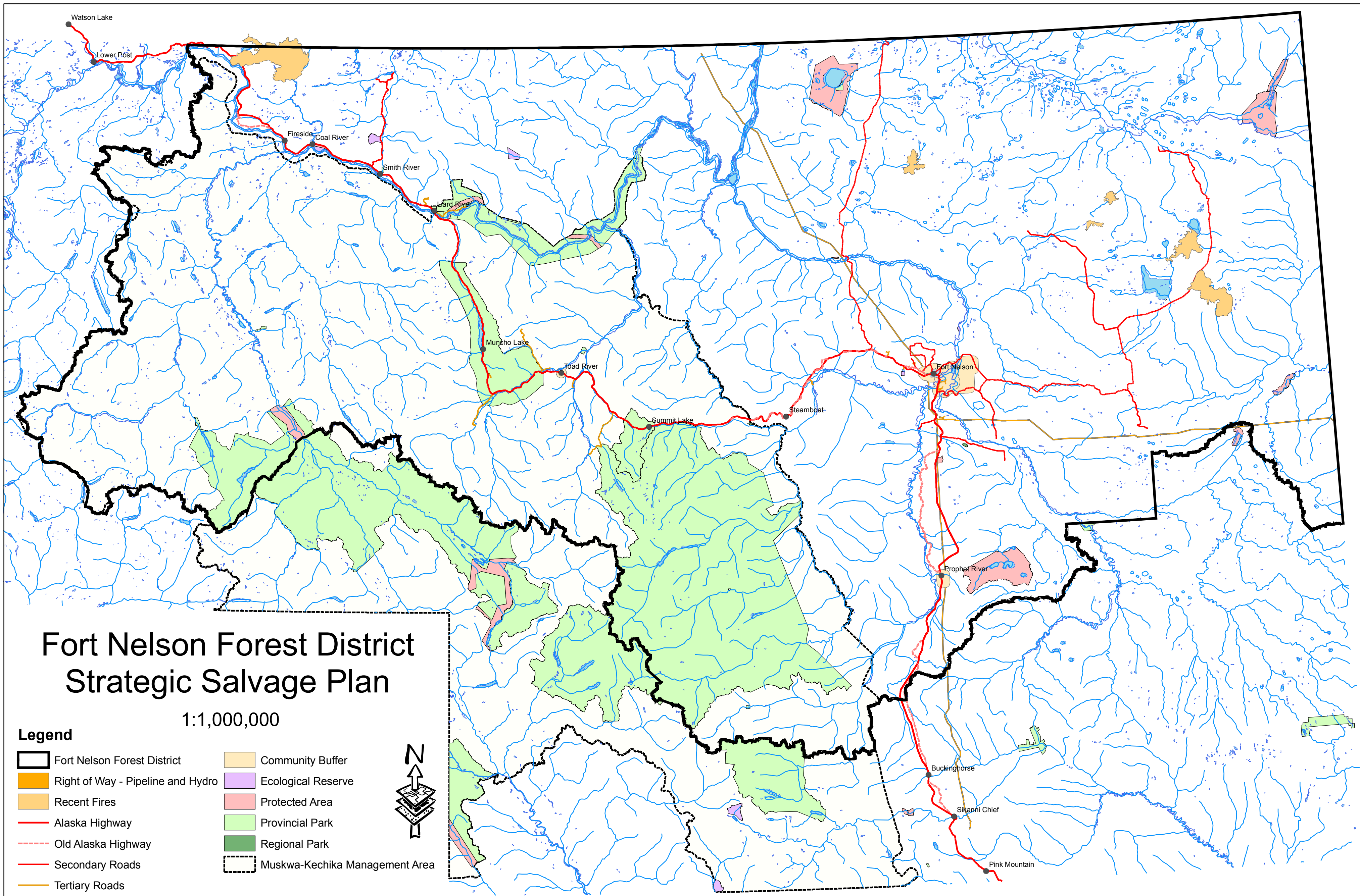
Approved



Stephen J. Lindsey, RPF
District Manager
Fort Nelson Forest District



Date



Fort Nelson Forest District Strategic Salvage Plan

1:1,000,000

Legend

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Fort Nelson Forest District | Community Buffer |
| Right of Way - Pipeline and Hydro | Ecological Reserve |
| Recent Fires | Protected Area |
| Alaska Highway | Provincial Park |
| Old Alaska Highway | Regional Park |
| Secondary Roads | Muskwa-Kechika Management Area |
| Tertiary Roads | |

