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July 11, 2003

Dear Sir/Madam:

Over the last few years, the Ministry of Forests has been developing a Karst Management Handbook (Best Management Practices), in response to the high-profile nature of karst management issues at provincial, national and international levels. I am pleased that the handbook has now been completed and is ready for distribution.

The best management practices recommended in this handbook were developed using information and expertise from a number of sources. A major contributor to the process was the multi-disciplinary Karst Management Working Group, which consisted of representatives from the Ministry of Forests; Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection; Ministry of Energy and Mines; representatives from two forest companies operating on Vancouver Island, Canfor and Doman-Western; and private consultants.

A great deal of valuable material was collected during a literature search from various jurisdictions around the world, including British Columbia. Existing karst management procedures from Northern Vancouver Island are also incorporated into the best management practices, along with field observations from karst terrain in various regions throughout the province. A number of internationally recognized karst experts from Canada, the United States and Australia also contributed to the development of this document.

The Karst Management Handbook is designed to assist in the management of karst ecosystems (both surface and subsurface components) through recommended activities on the surface. Recommended best management practices are aimed at the broad karst landscape, as well as individual karst features such as sinkholes and caves.

At the request of the Chief Forester, the karst management team conducted an impact assessment on the implications of implementing the recommendations in the handbook. Impact analyses were completed for both the province as a whole and for two Tree Farm Licences (TFLs) on Vancouver Island. The results of these analyses conclude that timber supply and harvesting cost impacts resulting from the karst best management practices will be relatively minor, owing to opportunities to overlap with the management objectives for other forest resources.



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You can access a copy of the Karst Management Handbook, the impact analysis and other related information at:

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/fordev/karst.htm>

If you prefer a paper copy, please contact Peter Bradford by phone (250-356-2134) or email (Peter.Bradford@gems1.gov.bc.ca).

Yours truly,

Original signed by Terje Vold

for Ralph Archibald, Director
Forest Practices Branch