To: Cindy Stern  
District Manager  
South Island Forest District  

From: Larry Pedersen  
Chief Forester  

Re: Forest Ecosystem Networks (FENs) and Landscape Unit Planning in Tree Farm Licences 44 and 46  

The purpose of this memo is to provide new policy for statutory decision-makers and planners on the procedures to apply old growth retention objectives to landscape units with grandparented FENs. Grandparented FENs are identified in part (b) of the definition in section 1(1) of the Operational Planning Regulation (OPR). This definition is as follows:

"forest ecosystem networks means an area

...(b) approved by the district manager and an employee of the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks before June 15, 1995,

for the purposes of maintaining or restoring the natural connectivity within an area, but a forest ecosystem network established under paragraph (b) expires on June 15, 2003:"

The creation of FENs before June 15, 1995, was intended to be a temporary measure until landscape unit planning was completed and established objectives for biodiversity management. On March 17, 1999, the Landscape Unit Planning Guide (LUPG) provided government direction to staff on the implementation of landscape unit planning.

The guide categorizes the land base for the purposes of apportioning old growth retention targets based on the definitions in the Timber Supply Review (TSR). Specifically, the guide sets a priority on placing old growth management areas (OGMAs) in areas classified as non-contributing before using timber harvesting land base. FENs were classified in the previous TSR as non-contributing or constrained. However, because the 2003 expiry date for FENs occurs during the timeframe of the current TSR, these areas will no longer become non-contributing for all of the term of the management plan. At the end of June 2003, they could be harvested and, without any other measures, the biodiversity values which the FENs provided would not be managed.

The intent in establishing the 2003 expiry date was to allow a period of time to incorporate FENs into OGMAs (using the full budget for old growth retention) through landscape unit objectives.
Only those portions of the FENs that do not become OGMAs will become part of the timber harvesting land base after June 2003.

In view of this, the following bullet point supplements direction in the LUPG and deals with establishing objectives in landscape units with FENs:

- **All FENs grandparented pursuant to the definition provided in the Operational Planning Regulation must be classified as non-contributing for the purposes of establishing landscape unit OGMA objectives.**

If, as a result of the completion of landscape unit planning, not all of the FENs are retained through the establishment of OGMAs, I would suggest that at that time, you review the OGMA and FEN locations for connectivity purposes. I would encourage you to consult widely with Research Branch, the academic community and MELP to inform yourself of the latest scientific information related to forest fragmentation and connectivity in coastal temperate forests. Also, please consult the March 1999, LUPG if you are considering the establishment of connectivity objectives in the non-OGMA FEN area. As per the LUPG, you should inform the licensees that the policy states that any connectivity objectives must be established only as draft objectives that will have no impact on the timber supply, and that licensee co-operation is voluntary. The intent would be to “test run” any draft objectives to ensure they meet biological and economic requirements before they would be considered for legal establishment.

While the non-contributing definition will apply to all FENs for the purposes of landscape unit planning, the current FENs are to be classified in the timber harvesting land base for the purposes of allowable annual cut determinations. Revised procedures for the incorporation of landscape biodiversity (including FENs) into TSRs will be determined by the Director of Timber Supply Branch, and will be sent out under separate cover.

If you have any questions on this revised policy, please address them to Allan Lidstone, Senior Planning Specialist, Forest Practices Branch.

Larry Pedersen  
Chief Forester

pc:  Joan Hesketh, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Energy and Mines  
Greg Koyl, Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations Division  
Jon O’Riordan, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks  
Jim Walker, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks  
Allan Lidstone, Senior Planning Specialist, Forest Practices Branch  
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Earl Warnock, Regional Director, Vancouver Island, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks