

DRAFT

Zero Net Deforestation

Proposed Implementation Plan

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

Province of British Columbia

December 17, 2010



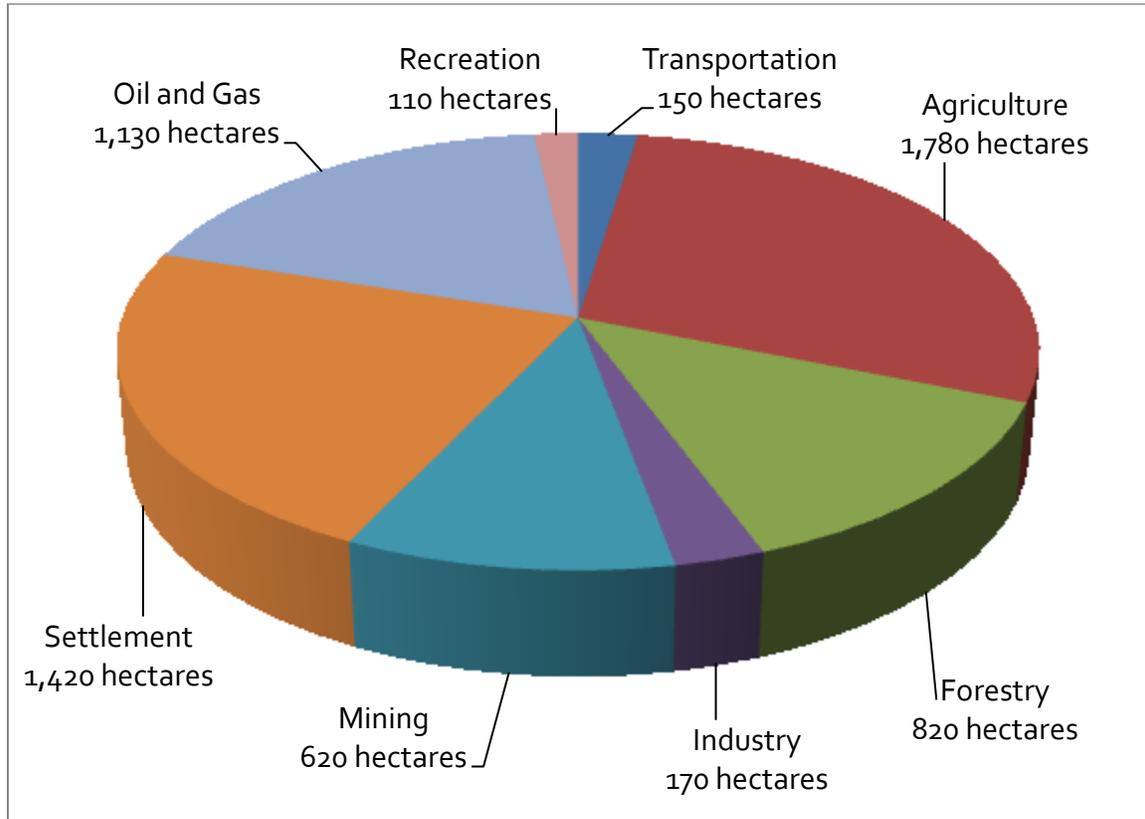


Figure 1. Area deforested in British Columbia in 2008, by sector.

Source: Canadian Forest Service and Ministry of Environment

Introduction

The Province of British Columbia has set a goal to be one of the first jurisdictions in the world to achieve zero net deforestation (ZND). This supports the province's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

This draft implementation plan presents overall objectives, guiding principles, approaches and proposed actions to meet the ZND objective.

Deforestation occurs when a forest is permanently cleared for another land use.¹ ZND is defined as the area of deforestation being equal to or less than the area of afforestation. Afforestation is planting trees or seeding to change land use from non-forest to forest.

The *Zero Net Deforestation Act* was passed on May 6, 2010. The Act states British Columbia's goal to achieve ZND by 2015 and requires government to report on related progress, actions and plans. The *ZND Act* applies to all land in B.C., including First Nations, federal and private lands.² It also provides regulation making powers for defining relevant terms such as "forest land." The Ministry of Forests, Mines and Lands is accountable for the *ZND Act*. Ten other agencies and their clients are involved in implementing ZND.

Developing an implementation plan by the spring of 2011 is the next step to achieve ZND. This draft is based upon feedback gathered over the summer of 2010 from ZND stakeholders.³

This document has been prepared for discussion purposes only. All actions contained within are presented solely as proposed or potential actions. Suggestions for changes or additions to the document, especially the proposed actions, are welcome (including input from stakeholders who were not actively involved during the summer of 2010).

Stakeholders are being asked to review this draft and to make suggestions to help design a final implementation plan. Comments should be emailed to znd@gov.bc.ca by January 24, 2011.

¹ Deforestation is defined as human-induced change from forest to non-forest. A change in land cover alone, such as timber harvesting followed by reforestation, is not considered deforestation as there is no loss of forest area. A change in land use zoning, e.g., from managed forest to residential, without removal of trees is also not considered deforestation.

² An estimated 60% of the areas deforested in 2008 were Crown land, and 40% were private land.

³ Provincial agencies, communities, sector associations and industry were invited to attend public engagement sessions and to make written submissions. A feedback summary and a compilation of written submissions from ZND stakeholders are available at www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/znd. Engagement of First Nations in the development of ZND policy is being pursued separately.

Objectives

This draft implementation plan is intended to address the following circumstances and government decisions.

1. Deforestation is the result of actions in **several economic sectors**. Figure 1 shows that agriculture, settlement, oil and gas development, forest roads, and mining were the leading sectors causing deforestation in 2008.
 - **Objective: Influence how economic and social development interacts with the land base, so that ZND is achieved without undermining economic development.**
2. The ZND Act is part of a suite of **legislation to address climate change**.⁴ This includes the [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act](#) 2007 (GGRTA), which sets the goals of reducing B.C.'s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 33% by 2020 and 80% by 2050, relative to 2007 emissions. Deforestation contributes almost 5% of these emissions.
 - **Objective: Reduce GHG emissions, alongside the area-based target for ZND.**
3. The ZND Act provides no regulatory powers or funding mechanisms to require action by the citizens of British Columbia. It relies on **voluntary action based on awareness and incentives**.
 - **Objective: Use information and incentives to encourage voluntary action and changes in behaviour.**
4. Zero net deforestation can be achieved through a combination of **avoiding** deforestation, **minimizing** the area of deforestation, and **balancing deforestation** by creating areas of new forest.
 - **Objective: Identify the best mix of these three actions to achieve ZND.**
5. The ZND Act requires government to **report on progress, actions and plans**.
 - **Objective: Identify ways to meet this requirement efficiently and effectively.**
6. The Speech from the Throne in 2008 promised that the government “will pursue a goal of zero net deforestation. It will work with **First Nations, industry and communities** to put that goal into law by 2010 and establish a viable strategy for realizing that vision by 2015.”
 - **Objective: Address, wherever possible, the various concerns raised by stakeholders, and incorporate constructive ideas into a ZND work plan.**

⁴ See <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cas/legislation/index.html> for the Ministry of Environment's climate change legislation. Other legislation, regulations and policies managed by other ministries also address climate change issues directly and indirectly. The Ministry of Forests, Mines and Lands' ZND Act is one example.

Guiding Principles

The following principles guided the preparation of this draft implementation plan and will also guide its implementation. They are in large part drawn from stakeholder feedback.

- 1. Keep the implementation plan simple, clear, and action-oriented.**
- 2. Promote collaboration, shared understanding and collective endorsement of the plan.**
- 3. Avoid unintended consequences.**
- 4. Promote voluntary action.**
- 5. Those who deforest may or may not be the ones who afforest.**
- 6. Keep it low-cost and cost-effective for all ZND partners.**
- 7. Respect private property rights, including rights of tenure holders.**
- 8. Use an integrated, whole-systems approach.**
- 9. Ensure ecologically appropriate afforestation.**
- 10. Count land reclaimed to a forest condition as afforestation.**
- 11. Avoid negative impacts on the agriculture sector and the Agricultural Land Reserve.**
- 12. Link to existing work by local governments, such as under the Climate Action Charter.**

Approaches

The following proposed approaches are expected to help achieve ZND.

Provincial Government Leadership

1. It is proposed that the Provincial government could achieve ZND on an area basis for **Public Sector Organizations** (PSOs) that deforest more than 100 hectares in a year in their operations.⁵
2. It is proposed that provincial government agencies could integrate and support achievement of ZND in their **policies and programs**.

Local Government Support for ZND

3. It is proposed that local governments could integrate and support achievement of ZND in their initiatives for **climate action and green communities**.

Sector Support for ZND

4. It is proposed that sector organizations could make reasonable efforts to **investigate and support opportunities** for their members to help achieve ZND, in cooperation with Provincial government agencies.

Partner Support for ZND

5. It is proposed that all ZND partners could contribute in ways that make sense for them, based on available **opportunities**.
6. It is proposed that all ZND partners could make efforts to reduce net deforestation by managing all land with **integration of all interests** that respect the land's characteristics and potential.
7. It is proposed that all ZND partners could seek first to avoid and minimize deforestation, in preference to mitigating deforestation with afforestation, because of the resulting **immediate benefit** of avoided **greenhouse gas emissions**.
8. It is proposed that all ZND partners could support and encourage actions to achieve ZND in their **communications**.

Related Considerations

9. It is proposed that **ecological restoration of grasslands** and open forests be continued, given the ecological benefits of these actions.

⁵ PSOs are defined in the [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act](#) as the Provincial government, including most Crown corporations and organizations for which the government is financially accountable.

Proposed Actions

A list of proposed actions (projects) to help achieve ZND is provided in Table 1. During the engagement process in the summer of 2010, all of these actions were supported by one or more stakeholders.

Suggestions for all these actions, and potential additional actions, are welcome.

The first six actions are already underway. The others may be undertaken, pending final decisions. The leader and partners for each action have not been confirmed in all cases, and may be changed. Staff and budgets for these actions remain to be determined.

For each proposed action, the table provides: an identifying number; a description, with key words **bolded**; the organization proposed as leader (underlined) and proposed partners; and dates for starting and completion.

Note: More detailed descriptions of the proposed actions are available on request.

Table 1. Proposed ZND Actions.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Proposed Action</i>	<i>Proposed Leader & Partners</i>	<i>Start Date and Completion</i>
<i>Near-Term Actions to be Completed by March 2011</i>			
1.	Review relevant policies in other jurisdictions to see what might be usable in B.C.	<u>MFML</u>	Underway
2.	Review property tax treatment for private forest land as it pertains to ZND.	<u>MFML</u> , BCAA, Ministry of Finance	Underway
3.	Assess opportunities to develop “ quick wins ” to be announced with the Implementation Plan in Spring 2011.	<u>MFML</u>	Underway
4.	Clarify that the <i>ZND Act</i> , regulation and policy do not affect the additionality of carbon offset projects.	<u>MOE</u> , MFML	Underway
5.	Develop a carbon offset protocol for avoided deforestation and afforestation.	<u>MOE</u> , MFML, Pacific Carbon Trust, MARR	Underway
6.	Prepare a regulation to bring <i>ZND Act</i> into force, define relevant terms and specify reporting requirements.	<u>MFML</u>	Underway
<i>Provincial Government Leadership</i>			
7.	Roll out implementation plan and announce champions .	<u>PAB</u> , MFML	Feb 2011 - Mar 2011
8.	Propose a plan to achieve ZND for Public Sector Organization (PSO) operations .	<u>PSOs</u> (collectively), <u>MFML</u>	Apr 2011 - Dec 2015
<i>General Support</i>			
9.	Prepare and distribute a list of areas suitable for afforestation , to assist interested ZND partners. Provide responses regarding potential conflicts with environmental policies and agriculture values. Consult with relevant stakeholders and tenure holders.	<u>MFML</u> , AGRI, MNRO, MOE, ALC, BCCA, GCCBC	Dec 2010 - Dec 2011

10.	Develop and distribute simplified GHG estimates for deforestation and afforestation.	<u>MOE</u> , MFML	Apr 2011 - Dec 2011
11.	Provide oversight of afforestation to ensure quality and ecological suitability.	<u>MFML</u> , MNRO	Jan 2011 - ongoing
12.	Demonstrate ZND with successful working examples (models) for various sectors.	<u>MFML</u> , PAB, PSOs, FFESC, stakeholder organizations	Apr 2011 - Sep 2011
13.	Prepare and distribute information and sector-specific brochures with examples, best practices, costs, benefits and existing incentives .	<u>MFML</u> , PAB, other ministries, BC Hydro, stakeholder organizations	Apr 2011 - Dec 2011
14.	Create an inventory of deforestation by region, land ownership and sector to track progress for reporting. Compile data on avoided deforestation , sectoral shares and government's share. Consider how to encourage reporting to government. Consult with relevant stakeholders.	<u>MFML</u> , other ministries, BCCA, BC Hydro, stakeholder organizations	Apr 2011 - Dec 2012
15.	Create an inventory of afforestation by region, land ownership and sector to track progress for reporting. Consult with relevant stakeholders. Consider how to encourage reporting to government.	<u>MFML</u> , other ministries, BCCA, BC Hydro, stakeholder organizations	Apr 2011 - Dec 2012
16.	Compile ZND actions and plans for the reports required under the <i>ZND Act</i> .	<u>MFML</u> , PSOs, stakeholder organizations	Jul 2012 - Apr 2013
17.	Prepare government's ZND reports as required under the <i>ZND Act</i> , including net deforestation by sector.	<u>MFML</u> , <u>PAB</u> , PSOs, stakeholder organizations	Jan 2013 - Jun 2013

Agriculture Sector

18.	Identify opportunities for policy changes and incentives , to reduce deforestation.	<u>AGRI</u> , BCCA, BCAC	Apr 2011 - Dec 2011
19.	Ensure that <i>ALC Act</i> and policies provide for protection of agricultural land from inappropriate afforestation .	<u>ALC</u> , AGRI	Apr 2011 - ongoing
20.	Promote avoided deforestation and afforestation where suitable on ranches and farms.	<u>AGRI</u> , MCSCD, local governments, UBCM, FBCWA, BCCA, BCAC	Apr 2011 - ongoing
21.	Distribute information about ZND opportunities to members.	<u>BCCA</u> , BCAC, AGRI	Apr 2011 - ongoing

Settlement Sector

22.	Identify opportunities for policy changes and incentives , to reduce net deforestation, as part of the Green Communities program.	<u>MCSCD</u> , AGRI, MFML, MNRO, MOE, MOTI, UBCM	Apr 2011 - Dec 2011
23.	Promote information and best practices examples for achieving ZND.	<u>MCSCD</u> , AGRI, MFML, MNRO, MOE, MOTI, UBCM	Apr 2011 - ongoing
24.	Promote balancing of deforestation for development with afforestation .	<u>Green Communities</u> (UBCM, MCSCD), AGRI, MFML, MNRO, MOE, MOTI, BC Nature	Apr 2011 - ongoing

Oil and Gas Sector

25.	Examine how to minimize deforestation with coordinated roads and corridors .	ENER , CAPP, Oil and Gas Commission	Apr 2011 - Dec 2011
26.	Promote balancing of deforestation for gas lines and well sites with afforestation .	CAPP , ENER, Oil and Gas Commission	Apr 2011 - ongoing

Forestry Sector

27.	Identify opportunities for policy changes and incentives , to reduce deforestation, including further limiting land deletions from Provincial Forests .	MFML , MNRO , ABCFP, CFPA, COFI	Apr 2011 - Dec 2011
28.	Examine how to minimize deforestation for roads, including: multi-use roads ; changes to road density , road standards , and related appraisals for road costs; and consideration of safety hazards . Consult with companies and safety committees.	MFML , MNRO , MOTI, MCSCD, ENER, ABCFP, BCBC, BC Hydro, CAPP, Clean Energy BC, CFPA, COFI, MABC, UBCM	Apr 2011 - Dec 2011
29.	Promote balancing of deforestation for major roads and landings with afforestation .	COFI , ABCFP, CFPA, MFML (BC Timber Sales)	Apr 2011 - ongoing

Mining Sector

30.	Identify opportunities for policy changes and incentives , to reduce deforestation.	MFML , MNRO	Apr 2011 - Dec 2011
31.	Examine changes to road standards that balance potential impacts on safety hazards and wildfire hazards with the opportunity to minimize deforestation.	MFML , MABC, MOTI	Apr 2011 - Dec 2011
32.	Promote balancing of deforestation for major mines with afforestation .	MABC , MFML, MNRO	Apr 2011 - ongoing

Industry (Electricity and Other) Sectors

33.	Examine opportunities for multi-use roads and corridors , to reduce deforestation.	MNRO , BC Hydro, Clean Energy BC	Apr 2011 - Dec 2011
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Transportation Sector

34.	Examine opportunities to reduce deforestation and increase afforestation around highways .	MOTI , MFML, MNRO	Apr 2011 - Dec 2011
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Recreation Sector

35.	Examine opportunities for policy changes and incentives , to reduce deforestation related to tenures, development and roads .	MNRO , MTTI, COTA, CWSAA	Apr 2011 - Dec 2011
36.	Promote balancing of deforestation for recreation developments with afforestation .	COTA , CWSAA , MNRO, MTTI, MFML	Apr 2011 - ongoing

The understanding and collaboration of stakeholders in all these sectors will help British Columbia achieve ZND through voluntary actions and changes in behaviour, based on awareness and incentives. This will also help achieve the provincial targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Please submit comments on this draft implementation plan to znd@gov.bc.ca by January 24, 2011.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABCFP	Association of British Columbia Forest Professionals
AGRI	Ministry of Agriculture
ALC	Agricultural Land Commission
ALR	Agricultural Land Reserve
BCAC	British Columbia Agriculture Council
BCBC	Business Council of British Columbia
BCCA	British Columbia Cattlemen’s Association
CAPP	Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers
CFPA	Coast Forest Products Association
COFI	Council of Forest Industries
COTA	Council of Tourism Associations of British Columbia
CWSAA	Canada West Ski Area Association
ENER	Ministry of Energy
FBCWA	Federation of British Columbia Woodlot Associations
FFESC	Future Forest Ecosystems Scientific Council
GCCBC	Grasslands Conservation Council of British Columbia
GGRTA	<i>Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act</i>
MABC	Mining Association of British Columbia
MARR	Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
MCSCD	Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development
MFML	Ministry of Forests, Mines and Lands
MNRO	Ministry of Natural Resource Operations
MOE	Ministry of Environment
MOTI	Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
MTTI	Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Investment
UBCM	Union of British Columbia Municipalities
ZND	zero net deforestation

Acknowledgements

This draft of a proposed implementation plan would not have been possible without the time and ideas of many stakeholders who attended meetings and submitted written comments. Their contributions to the development of the zero net deforestation policy are greatly appreciated.

The plan was prepared by a small working group of staff from the Ministry of Forests, Mines and Lands and the Ministry of Agriculture. Other staff in these two ministries and several other ministries provided valued support and input.

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