



Integrated Land
Management
Bureau

DRAFT

Lakes South Sustainable Resource Management Plan

Old Growth Forest Objective Amendment

May 2006

**PROPOSED ORDER TO AMEND OBJECTIVES 2 AND 3
(OLD GROWTH FOREST RETENTION OBJECTIVES)
LAKES SOUTH
SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2003**

- I.** Pursuant to Section 93.4 (1) of the *Land Act*, objectives 2 and 3 listed in the Lakes South Sustainable Resource Management Plan, June 2003, are cancelled and replaced with a new objective number 2 found in the Lakes South Sustainable Resource Management Plan Old Growth Forest Objective Amendment, May 2006.
- II.** Map 1 attached to this order provides the general geographic location to which objective 2 applies. The actual location of operational activities in the immediate vicinity of these boundaries may vary from the boundaries shown on the map in order to adjust for inaccuracies in the boundaries, or to reflect better information on the presence or absence of old growth values, provided that the overall intent of the objective is achieved.
- III.** Pursuant to Section 8 (2) (b) of the *Forest and Range Practices Act* the holder of a forest stewardship plan (FSP) must propose and submit for approval amendments to the FSP by July 1, 2007.
- IV.** Pursuant to Section 16 (2) of the *Forest and Range Practices Act* the objectives amended by this order apply despite that subsection.
- V.** Old growth Objectives 2 and 3 established under the “Order to Establish the Lakes South Landscape Units and Objectives” will, on the effective date of this order, cease to have an effect for the area in this new order.
- VI.** Objectives for old growth may be amended in the future to incorporate new information arising from issues identified by the Lakes Plan Implementation Committee, Morice and the Lakes Innovative Forest Practices Agreement, monitoring results, Timber Supply Reviews or other relevant information.
- VII.** This order takes effect on October 1, 2006.

Regional Executive Director
Northern Region
Integrated Land Management Bureau
Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

Date

Background

The Lakes South Sustainable Resource Management Plan (SRMP), June 2003 outlines objectives and strategies for resource management which include the management of representative old growth forests. Candidate old growth management areas (COGMAs) were identified and agreed to as part of the SRMP process, but were not legally established. This was done in order to allow forest licensees flexibility with regards to harvesting and road building activities in response to a mountain pine beetle infestation. Since the beetle infestation has now reached its peak in much of the SRMP area, and will soon reach its peak across the entire Lakes South area, the Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB) is legally designating the COGMAs, and as such, is cancelling objectives 2 and 3, and replacing them with a new objective 2.

An assessment of the COGMAs was completed to:

- Determine whether timber harvesting activities had occurred in COGMAs;
- Determine whether timber harvesting had compromised the biodiversity values in affected COGMAs; and,
- Update the COGMA spatial coverage to reflect changes proposed by the forest industry or government agencies.

From this assessment, amendments were made to the COGMAs, and are reflected in Map 1: Draft Old Growth Management Areas – Lakes South SRMP. Table 1 provides summary statistics for the draft OGMA's shown on Map 1. It is important to recognize that the draft OGMA's reflect a package deal. There may be some instances where better areas could have been proposed as OGMA's, but were not selected due to the careful balancing of social, environmental and economic factors. To address the fact that the old forest establishment targets could not be met in all landscape units, the overall area of OGMA's was increased to allow the younger forest stands to grow into old growth over time (recruitment).

This COGMA assessment process was managed by ILMB through a partnership with the Morice and Lakes Innovative Forest Practices Agreement licensees, and in consultation with Cheslatta Forest Products, the Ministry of Forests and Range, and the Ministry of Environment.

Old Growth Forest Retention through OGMA Establishment

Old Growth Management Areas (OGMAs) are identified primarily for the purposes of retaining or restoring the ecological attributes associated with old forest, and maintaining areas that are subject to natural forest succession. They may also contribute to the retention of other features important for biodiversity or other values. OGMAs function to provide reserves for old growth forest-dependent species across the landscape. The areas were selected to meet old seral criteria over time, while minimizing impacts on timber supply.

The goal of the following old growth forest objective is to manage for the retention of areas that are appropriately sized, contain, or can recruit specific structural old growth forest attributes, and represent the range of ecosystem types found across the Lakes South planning area. Limited operations within them are allowed to provide flexibility and minor improvements of locations, while assuring that the overall effectiveness of old forest conservation in the area is not diminished.

The old growth forest objective in this document takes direction from the Lakes District Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). Specifically, Objective 43 from the LRMP states, “Maintain biodiversity at the ecosystem, species, and genetic levels through the application of ecosystem management principles”. Relevant management strategies state:

- 43.7 Develop and implement an old growth management strategy which establishes, throughout the district, Old Growth Management Areas (OGMAs) dominated by old tree cover and containing most of the structure, function, microclimatic conditions and biota associated with old forest, including interior forest conditions. Within OGMAs, maintain old growth and interior forest conditions, and provide a representative cross-section of ecosystem types occurring in the District.
- 43.8 Generally, the old growth management strategy will take advantage of existing old forest within special resource management areas, habitat linkages, riparian and lakeshore reserves, and forest harvesting land base exclusions. Where sufficient old forest is not available, OGMAs may be recruited from other age-class and/or resource management categories.

In the event that there are future planning processes, the existing legal objectives will be re-examined to ensure the overall socio-economic balance anticipated by the Lakes District Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), or a subsequent process, is maintained.

The old forest establishment targets in Table 1 specify the proportion of the old seral target that must be met in spatial OGMAs. These establishment targets were identified by the expert panel involved in the original Lakes South SRMP process. They were modified from the old seral targets found in the Biodiversity Guidebook by the expert panel to allow the old growth targets to be met both spatially and aspatially across the land base, and to recognize the contribution to biodiversity from wildlife tree patches and riparian zones.

Primary Roles and Responsibilities for Agencies

Ministry of Forests and Range (MoFR)

- MoFR will undertake tenure administration and compliance and enforcement consistent with legal OGMA objectives.
- MoFR forest health specialist will provide advice on the forest health risks associated with infestations in OGMAs as a basis for determining whether an OGMA amendment to permit sanitation harvesting is warranted.
- MoFR will provide responses to referrals regarding changes to approved OGMAs.

Ministry of Environment (MoE)

- MoE will oversee government-wide strategies and initiatives for biodiversity management, including overall effectiveness monitoring in relation to that strategy.

Ministry of Agriculture and Lands - Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB)

- ILMB is responsible for identifying, establishing, monitoring, and amending OGMAs as required.

Objective 2: Manage for old growth forests by retaining OGMA's, as identified on Map 1.

Timber harvesting and boundary adjustments are not allowed in OGMA's identified on Map 1, except as necessary under a) or b), and only where these activities will not diminish the overall effectiveness of old forest conservation.

a) Timber harvesting may be allowed for one or more of the following purposes, provided that an alternate area or areas in the same Landscape Unit/BEC variant unit are identified and reserved from harvesting, and provided that interior forest conditions are met:

- New road development and maintenance where no practicable alternatives exist. When roads have been constructed within OGMA's, road deactivation will occur once operational activities are complete;
- Addressing a substantiated forest health factor within an OGMA, where this poses a significant and substantiated forest health risk to forests outside the OGMA and where harvesting constitutes an appropriate and effective control action; or
- Addressing a public or industrial safety concern, or an environmental hazard, where no practicable alternative exists.

b) Boundary adjustments may be allowed to occur within the mapped areas of OGMA's, as indicated on Map 1, provided that an alternate area or areas in the same LU/BEC variant unit are identified and reserved from harvesting, and provided that interior forest conditions are met.

Strategies

- 1) Ensure that over time, the old forest establishment target for each LU/BEC variant unit as noted in Table 1 is achieved;
- 2) Timber harvesting will be permitted in OGMAs under strategies 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7;
- 3) Within OGMAs the following activities will be allowed:
 - First Nations traditional uses;
 - cone gathering and tree topping;
 - fire suppression;
 - grazing;
 - hunting, fishing, trapping;
 - commercial or non-commercial recreational use;
 - subsurface resource uses, including exploration for and development of oil and gas, mineral, and aggregate resources, and including incidental tree cutting for these purposes;
 - harvesting and collecting botanical forest products;
 - any other use for which a lease or licence is issued under the *Land Act*.

Persons engaged in these uses are encouraged to avoid or minimize disturbance to OGMAs. Disturbance within OGMAs that occur as a result of these uses will be assessed on a landscape unit basis under the Policy on the Replacement of Old Growth Management Areas.

- 4) Within OGMAs, boundary adjustments will be allowed in order to:
 - adjust for mapping errors so that the functional boundaries of the OGMA better reflect the physical features (i.e. streams) intended as the boundaries;
 - improve harvest boundary alignment in a way that will contribute to the maintenance of the OGMA;
 - shift the location of the contiguous area of the OGMA to improve the retention of old forest attributes as identified through field assessment;
- 5) Any timber harvesting under the provisions described in the objective that results in a significant area of disturbance¹ would be conditional on the forest agreement holder identifying and reserving from harvest an alternative area (or areas) within the same Biogeoclimatic variant/ Landscape Unit which is of equal or greater extent and of equal or greater value for biodiversity conservation than the area to be disturbed;
- 6) Allow natural processes (i.e. fire, insects, disease) to occur within OGMAs except where those processes threaten values within or outside the OGMAs. Aim at retaining structural features of old growth where intervention is required (see Figure 1 Decision Matrix for Harvesting in OGMAs, Lakes South Sustainable Resource Management Plan, June 2003);

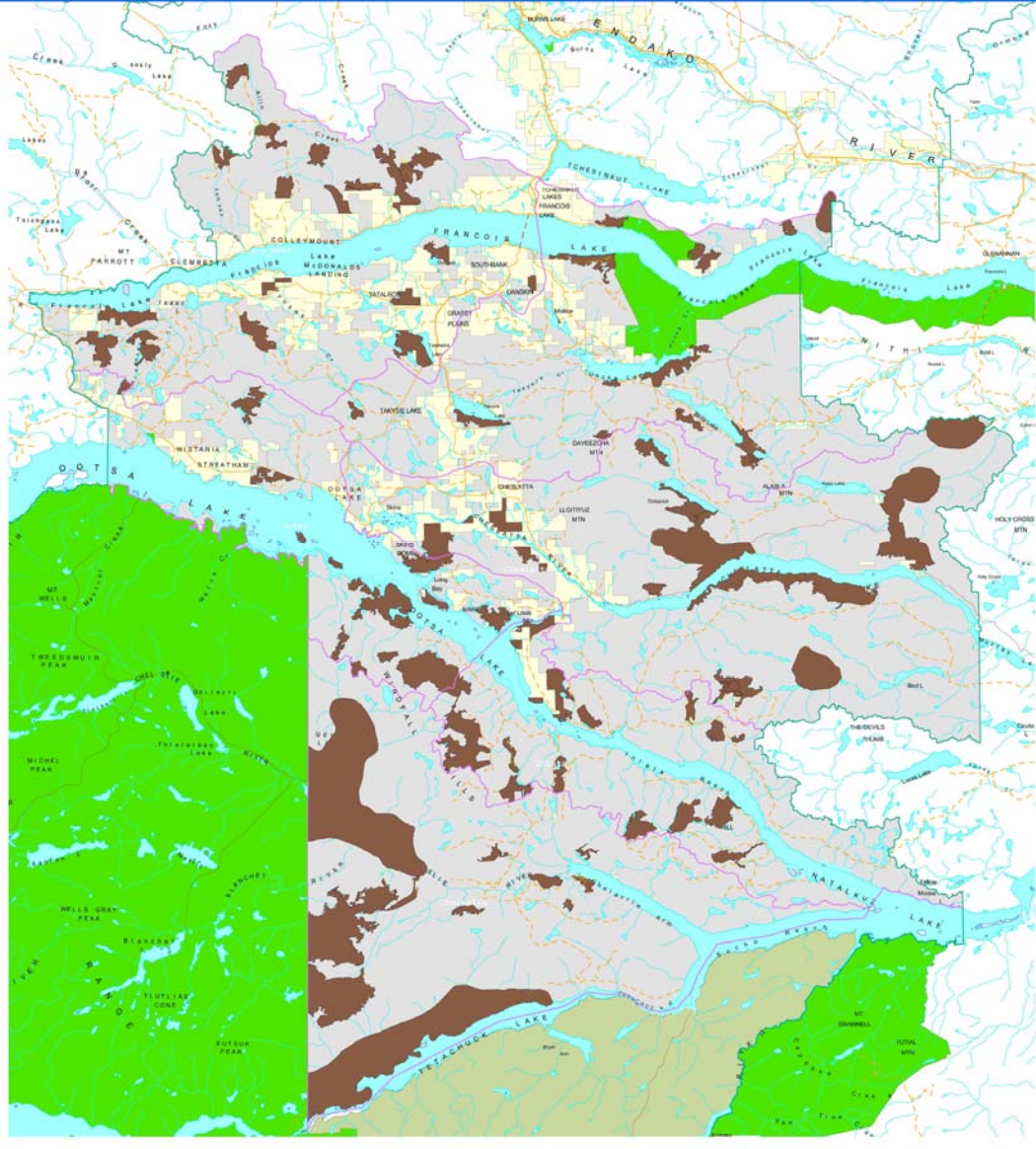
¹ The removal of a small number of trees would not be considered to create a significant area of disturbance; i.e., where one to several trees is harvested to address a safety issue or a substantiated forest health factor.

- 7) Within OGMA's new grazing tenures will not be issued nor will the boundaries of existing tenures be changed;
- 8) Replace or modify OGMA's where their attributes have been significantly compromised due to exploration or mining activities, natural processes, or harvesting as per the above strategies. Forest stands within OGMA's that have been impacted by mountain pine beetles may still contribute to old seral targets;
- 9) The extent and location of the disturbance in OGMA's and of the alternative area or areas reserved from harvesting should be reported in a digital format to the Integrated Land Management Bureau.

Table 1. Draft OGMA Area Analysis (May 25, 2006)

Landscape Unit (biodiversity emphasis option)	BEC Variant	Crown Forested	Old age	Old target		Old establishment target		Candidate OGMA's				Uncha Red Hills Park	
				%	ha	%	ha	Crown Forest in COGMA's		Old in COGMA's		Crown Forest	Old
								% est. target	ha	% est. target	ha		
FRANCOIS WEST	SBS dk	25475	>140	11%	2802	75%	2102	191%	4005	104%	2184	0	0
Intermediate	SBS mc 2	21347	>140	11%	2348	75%	1761	143%	2519	106%	1860	0	0
	ESSF	3740	>250	9%	337	75%	252	142%	358	84%	212	0	0
L.U. TOTAL		50562			5487		4115	167%	6882	103%	4256	0	0
FRANCOIS EAST	SBS dk	45835	>140	11%	5042	50%	2521	122%	3075	80%	2015	6153	1561
Low	SBS mc 2	12321	>140	11%	1355	50%	678	54%	366	48%	327	828	194
	ESSF	3982	>250	9%	358	50%	179	0%	0	0%	0	1028	0
L.U. TOTAL		62138			6756		3378	102%	3441	69%	2342	8009	1755
CHESLATTA	ESSF	8653	>250	9%	779	75%	584	207%	1207	0%	0	0	0
Intermediate	SBS mc 2	35435	>140	11%	3898	75%	2923	128%	3744	62%	1824	0	0
	SBS dk	48434	>140	9%	4359	75%	3269	203%	6643	114%	3726	0	0
L.U. TOTAL		92522			9036		6777	171%	11594	82%	5550	0	0
OOTSA NORTH	SBS mc 2	5378	>140	11%	592	75%	444	120%	532	101%	447	0	0
Intermediate	SBS dk	11020	>140	11%	1212	75%	909	160%	1457	92%	835	0	0
LU TOTAL		16398			1804		1353	147%	1989	95%	1282	0	0
OOTSA CMZ (E)	LOW (E)	11093	>140	20%	2219	50%	1109	281%	3120	91%	1008	0	0
L.U. TOTAL		11093			2219		1109	281%	3120	91%	1008	0	0
INTATA NORTH	SBS dk	13205	>140	11%	1453	75%	1089	83%	905	32%	350	0	0
Intermediate	SBS mc 2	5597	>140	11%	616	75%	462	160%	740	113%	520	0	0
	ESSF	386	>250	9%	35	75%	26	38%	10	0%	0	0	0
LU TOTAL		19188			2103		1577	105%	1655	55%	870	0	0
INTATA CMZ	LOW (E)	25313	>140	20%	5063	50%	2531	160%	4040	68%	1718	0	0
L.U. TOTAL		25313			5063		4109	139%	5695	63%	2588	0	0
CHELASLIE CMZ	HIGH (B,C,D)	59871	>140	40%	23948	75%	17961	114%	20500	47%	8456	0	0
	MODERATE (A)	21307	>140	30%	6392	20%	1278	31%	395	16%	205	0	0
	LOW (E)	9947	>140	20%	1989	30%	597	13%	75	12%	74	0	0
L.U. TOTAL		91125			32330		19837	106%	20970	44%	8735	0	0
GRAND TOTAL		368339			64796		42254	131%	55346	63%	26631	8009	1755

Map1: Draft Old Growth Management Areas - Lakes South SRMP



Legend

- Provincial Park
- Protected Area
- Private Land, Woodlot, Indian Reserve
- Draft OGMAs
- Lakes South SRMP Area
- Landscape Unit Boundary
- Lakes TSA Boundary

Integrated Land Management Bureau

Draft OGMAs Lakes South SRMP

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