

IFPA update...

News from the Morice & Lakes Innovative Forest Practices Agreement

In November 1999, BC's Minister of Forests signed an **Innovative Forest Practices Agreement (IFPA)** for two timber supply areas (TSAs) in northern BC: the **Morice TSA** and the **Lakes TSA**. This inaugural issue of "Update" is meant to answer common questions about the **Morice & Lakes IFPA** such as:

- "What is an IFPA?"
- "How do IFPAs relate to Land & Resources Management Plans (LRMPs)?"
- "How do IFPAs and LRMPs relate to forest certification?" 🐿

WHAT IS AN IFPA?

IFPAs are provincial programs that are intended to encourage new approaches to forest management. They are agreements between major forest companies and the Minister of Forests, and are mandated under the *Forest Practices Code Act* through the *Innovative Forest Practices Regulation*.



ABOVE: Nadina Mountain, seen here from Owen Lake south of Houston BC, is a prominent feature of the Morice & Lakes IFPA landscape. Photo by: Lloyd F. Davies

Initially, the IFPA program was a product of the *Jobs & Timber Accord*. The Accord has now run its course, but the IFPA program remains, in the form of unique forest management programs in each of BC's forest regions. Each IFPA is voluntary, locally-based, and industry-led, with its own unique focus and priorities. A core requirement of each IFPA is the development of a **forestry plan** that describes the IFPA's intent, and the activities that it will implement.

WHAT IS THE MORICE & LAKES IFPA?

The Morice & Lakes IFPA aims to develop and implement a *Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)* plan for two Timber Supply Areas: the Morice TSA, near Houston, and the Lakes TSA, near Burns Lake. This plan will fulfill the requirement for an IFPA forestry plan, but may also embrace a wider scope. The proponents of the Morice & Lakes IFPA recognize that to be

sustainable and implementable, local residents will need to support the plan. The process for gaining this support is one of the "innovations" of the IFPA.

By participating in *Public Advisory Groups*, local residents identify resource management objectives that they consider important. Objectives provided by First Nations, government, and forest companies will also

shape the plan. All groups are invited to remain involved in developing the SFM plan, and in monitoring its implementation. Forest companies and the BC Ministry of Forest's *Small Business Forest Enterprise Program* will implement the plan.

WHAT IS AN LRMP?

A *Land & Resources Management Plan (LRMP)* is a provincial initiative that uses public consultation to guide government in making land-use decisions. Typically, an LRMP will specify land use zones for a TSA, along with higher-level social objectives for those zones and monitor their implementation. The SFM plan to be developed by the Morice & Lakes IFPA will be a strategic implementation plan that forges a link between higher-level objectives (like those defined by LRMPs) and operational plans required by the Forest Practices Code.

WHAT IS FOREST CERTIFICATION?

Forest certification is recognition by a qualified, independent third party that forest management meets a predetermined set of standards.

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HOW IS THE PUBLIC INVOLVED?

The Morice & Lakes IFPA aims to develop a Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Plan for both the Morice and the Lakes Timber Supply Areas. The development of this plan depends on local residents' active participation in developing and evaluating scenarios for resource management.

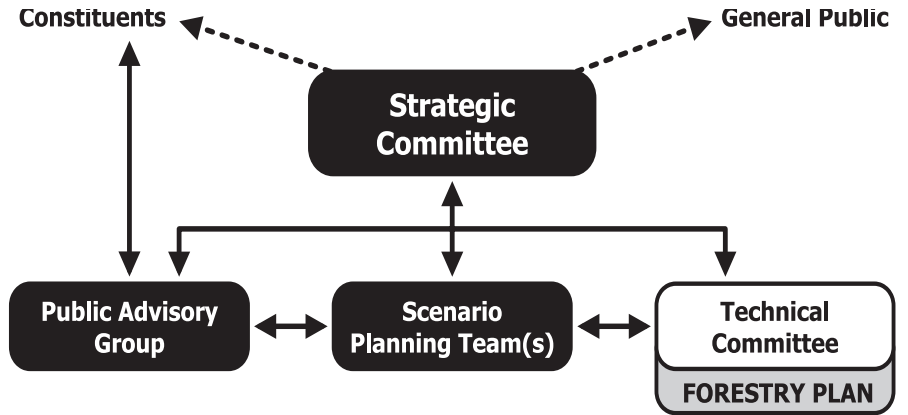
Residents do this by using a sophisticated SFM approach developed by the Prince George-based *McGregor Model Forest Association*. Using the McGregor's methods and tools, residents hypothesize a variety of management approaches and model the expected results of each, in an effort to develop optimal forest solutions.

Concurrently with the IFPA, the BC Ministry of Forests has selected the Morice Forest District as a certification pilot, and the major licence holders in the Morice area have announced that they intend to pursue CSA certification. Residents can also use the "McGregor Approach" to ensure their values are included within these processes.

The Morice & Lakes IFPA is being implemented via a *Strategic Committee* that oversees the program's general direction. This committee is comprised of public, government, First Nations, and industry members, and its goal is to achieve broad community support for the SFM plan through effective public participation. The IFPA's administrative structure is shown above in *Figure 3*.

The goal of the *Public Advisory Group*, on the other hand, is to represent the views and values of various local constituencies of interest (recreation, small business, etc.), and to maintain communication with those constituencies. First Nations groups and local residents with interests in resource management are asked to choose Public Advisory Group members to represent them, and are encouraged to provide these members with feedback during the development of the SFM plan.

A *Scenario Planning Team* in each Timber Supply Area will create resource management scenarios that best address the needs of all participants. These scenarios will form the basis of the final SFM plan. Members of Public Advisory Groups, resource agencies, and local companies are invited to



ABOVE: Figure 3. The Morice & Lakes IFPA Administrative Structure. Boxes shown in black have public representation and/or involvement.

participate in the Scenario Planning Teams. The Teams will be provided with technical analysis and decision support by contracted specialists, and by a committee of technical staff drawn from IFPA participants.



The organizations and companies noted below provide guidance and support to the Morice & Lakes IFPA.

- Babine Forest Products
- BC Ministry of Forests
- BC Ministry of Environment, Lands & Parks
- Canfor Corporation
- Decker Lake Forest Products
- District of Houston
- Forest Renewal BC

- Houston Forest Products
- L&M Lumber Ltd.
- McGregor Model Forest Association
- Natural Resources Canada - Canadian Forest Service
- West Fraser Mills
- Village of Burns Lake
- Village of Granisle



Funding is provided by:

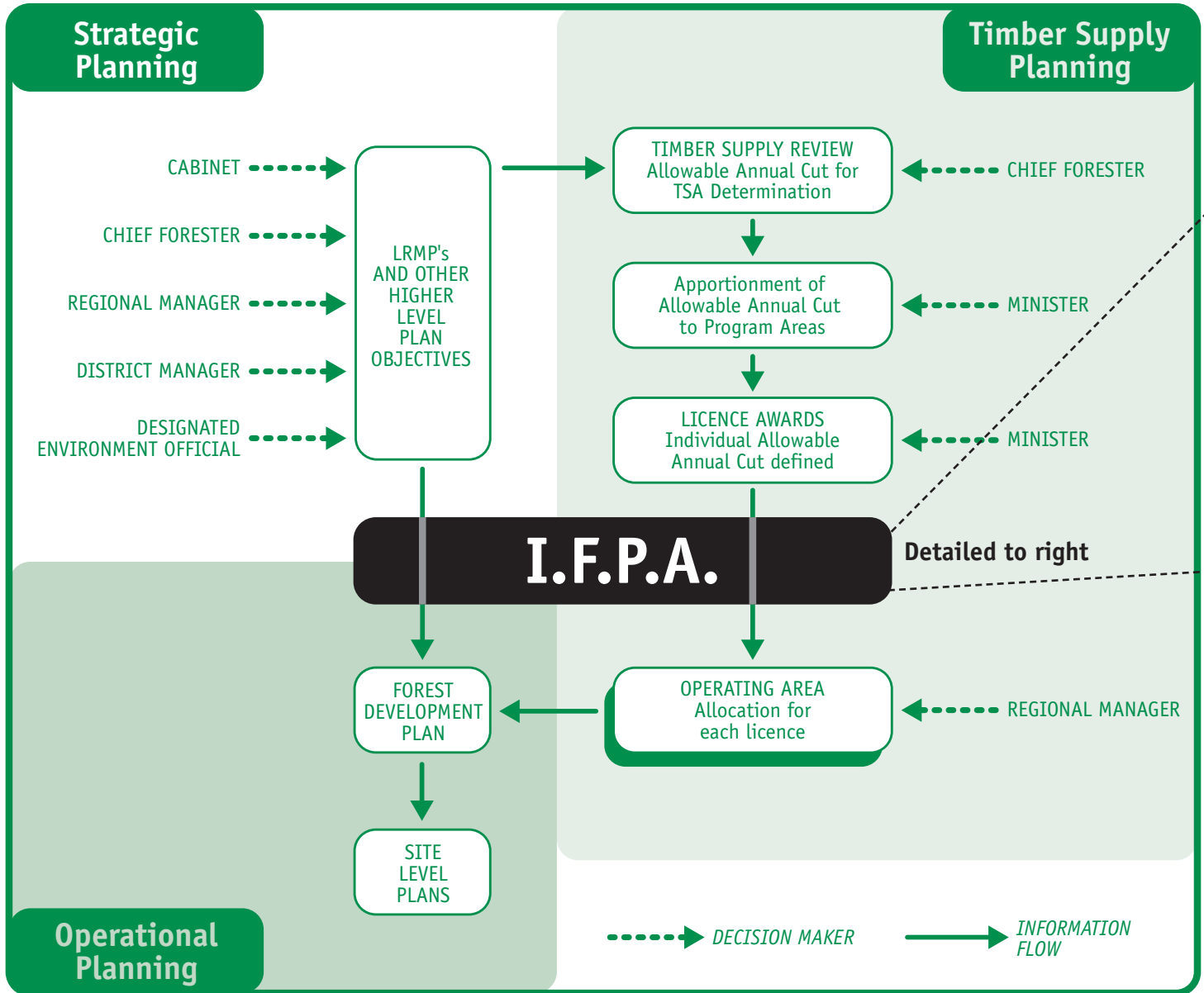
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ABOVE: Figure 1. The forest planning framework of British Columbia, showing the interdependency of various planning phases. The IFPA program fits into this framework as shown above.

These standards are set by groups that generally follow a broad consultative process, national or international in scope. In Canada, these groups include the *International Standards Organization (ISO)*, the *Canadian Standards Association (CSA)*, and the *Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)*. Forest certification is driven by consumers who insist that the forest products they buy come from responsibly managed forests.

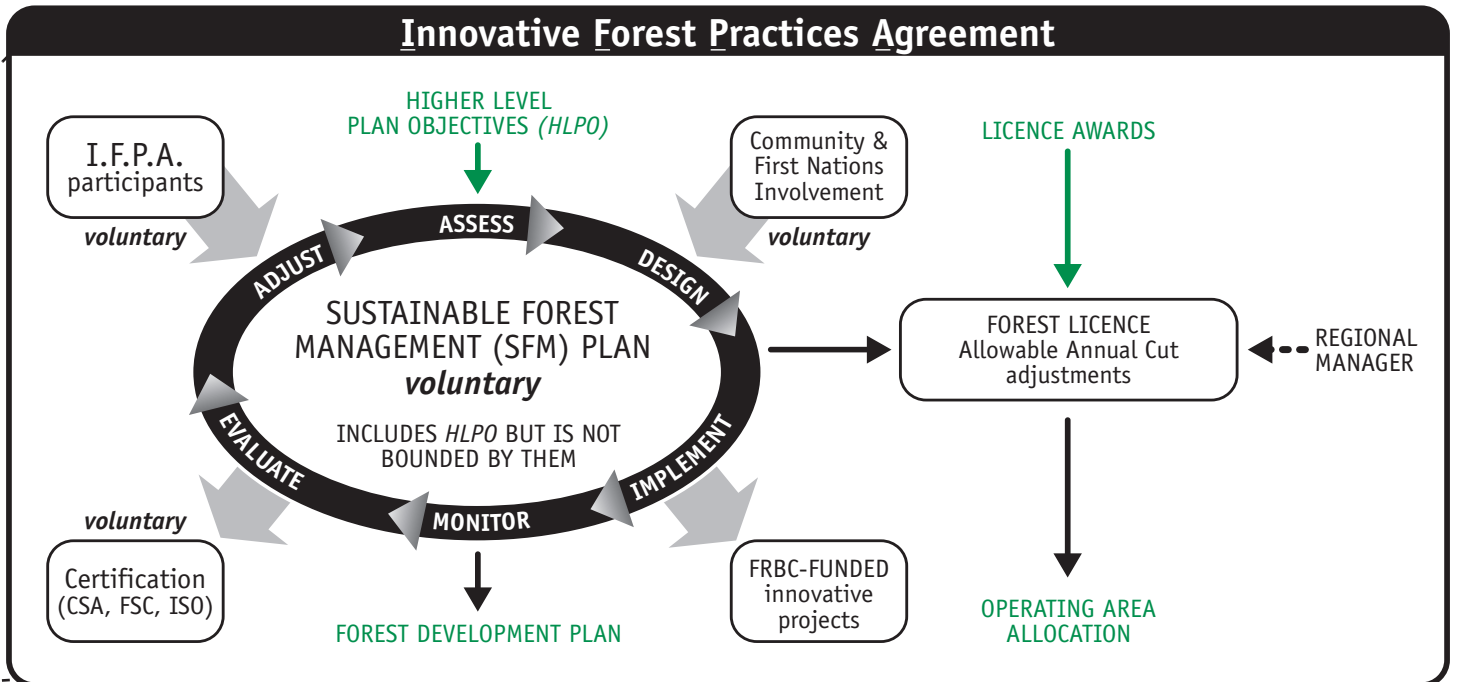
HOW DO IFPAs, LRMPs AND CERTIFICATION WORK TOGETHER?

Both IFPAs and forest certification require a SFM plan, and all require

public involvement. A single SFM plan can use objectives from all three processes, letting planners develop inclusive management strategies and implementation plans. As well, common performance indicators (measures) can be used to track progress in IFPAs, LRMPs, and certification.

WHAT IS THE FOREST PLANNING FRAMEWORK OF BRITISH COLUMBIA?

Provincial forest planning in BC is based on two streams of decision-making: **forest land use** and **forest land management**.



ABOVE: Figure 2. Detail of IFPA relationship to provincial forest planning, showing how an adaptive SFM plan is the focal point of the Morice & Lakes IFPA program.

Land use plans generally define zones and specific objectives for those zones. In the *Forest Practices Code Act* and *Strategic Planning Regulation*, this is referred to as "higher-level planning."

Forest management plans, in contrast, define the practices needed to implement the objectives specified in higher-level plans. *The Forest Practices Code Act* and *Operational Planning Regulation* refer to these plans as "operational plans."

Timber supply planning is guided by the *Forest Act*, runs parallel to both land use and forest management planning, and interacts with both. Land use objectives are fed into timber supply planning from higher level plans, while harvesting areas and rates are fed back into forest management planning. *Figure 1*, shown to the left, portrays the interdependency of these planning phases.

WHAT IS AN SFM PLAN AND HOW IS IT PART OF THE MORICE & LAKES IFPA?

SFM plans have qualities that are both strategic (long-term, high-level) and tactical (shorter-term, more specific).

They are strategic in that they use high-level objectives provided by local communities, First Nations, agencies, and forest companies. Because these objectives may not be part of other higher-level plans, SFM plans can transcend the legislated minimums in forest management.

SFM plans are tactical in that they include strategies for implementing and monitoring strategic objectives. By analyzing scenarios and options, SFM plans can reveal how specific forest practices should fit into operational plans in order to meet strategic objectives, and what knowledge or information gaps should be addressed to improve management.

The adaptive management cycle, as shown above in *Figure 2*, is the basis of the SFM planning and implementation process being used in the Morice & Lakes IFPA. Management objectives are fed into the SFM process from formal higher-level plans, from communities and First Nations, and from IFPA participants. Planners then design strategies which forest companies and Small Business Forest Enterprise Programs will use to implement these objectives.

Planners then use predetermined performance indicators to evaluate the results of implementation. Next, they confirm whether current objectives are still appropriate, given changing knowledge and circumstances. The final step is to refine strategies for the next implementation cycle.

This process provides avenues for IFPA innovations to be implemented, for community and First Nations involvement, for the prioritization of Forest Renewal BC-funded strategic projects, and for the addition of certification requirements. As well, a legal mechanism is provided (through the *Innovative Forest Practices Regulation*) for Regional Managers to approve Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) adjustments based on the SFM plan.