

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 the Morice and Lakes Timber Supply Areas in Northwestern BC. The Morice & Lakes IFPA is developing Sustainable Forest Management Plans using innovative approaches in public involvement, forest productivity and ecosystem-based management.



The Visible Landscape and the Mountain Pine Beetle

To most people traveling along Highway 16 west of Prince George, the mountain pine beetle epidemic has become a visual landscape issue. It only makes sense, therefore, that salvage harvesting operations could also become a visual landscape issue. Is it possible to salvage mountain pine beetle-damaged timber and minimize the visual impact to forested hillsides?

M&L IFPA partner companies have an immediate challenge to balance salvage operations with visual landscape management in visually sensitive areas such as recreation areas, rivers and highway corridors. "There are places within the Morice Timber Supply Area where the public has identified visual quality as an important resource management objective," said Houston Forest Products planning forester Jaret van der Giessen. "We need to address this objective in these visually sensitive areas while also achieving other forest management goals."

Forsite, a forestry consulting firm with offices located throughout BC, was hired in August 2007 to supply visual design expertise within both TSAs. During 2007/2008 they completed an integrated visual design (IVD) in selected areas of the IFPA area on behalf of partner licensees. Integrated visual design provides an approach to designing harvest openings in highly visible forested areas so that scenic values are maintained. Forsite has been working on visual landscape management projects throughout the province for some 20 years, and recently completed some visual landscape design work in the Burns Lake Community Forest.

"On this project we worked closely with IFPA partner companies, who provided us with visually sensitive locations iden-

tified from previous planning processes," said Randy Spyksma, senior planning forester with Forsite. A total of 14 locations were identified and delineated as Visual Design Units (VDUs). These VDUs were located in various locations, from the north end of Babine Lake in the north to Newcombe Lake in the south. Other locations included Taltapin Lake, Natowite Lake, several locations along Highway 16, Broman Lake, the Morice River corridor, and Maxan Lake.

An intensive analysis of each VDU was undertaken by Forsite, using photography and visual force analysis (lines of force help design visual reserves and locate cutblock boundaries). In addition, a complete resource analysis was undertaken to identify areas that were not harvestable or not likely to be harvested. A land feature analysis was also completed to help design harvest shapes to be consistent with the overall landscape character.

According to Cheryl Drew, visual specialist with Forsite, the challenge of managing the visual resource in the context of the mountain pine beetle epidemic can be daunting. "The pine types are extensive so it can be difficult, but using visual design principles we project natural cutblock shapes to maintain landscape characteristics," she said. Licensees such as Houston Forest Products can use these natural cutblock shapes— along with information on harvest timing—to reduce the impact of harvesting on the visual landscape.

Forsite developed maps for each VDU that illustrated operability, land features, concept design and a map showing harvesting options. The three dimensional rendering above is from the land features map of Taltapin Lake.

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Knowledge Transfer Session Held in Houston



Mike Daniels (left) of Highland Forestry and Gary Quanstrom of West Fraser at the Knowledge Transfer Session.

About 30 resource managers from throughout the region attended the 6th annual M&L IFPA Knowledge Transfer Session held in Houston on June 6th.

Participants this year included representatives from licensees, provincial government ministries, First Nations, the IFPA's public advisory group and from the local consulting community.

"The knowledge we gain through our continual improvement program is important for our partner companies because it identifies gaps and improves forestry planning," said IFPA general manager Jim Burbee. "But we want to ensure that the knowledge is available to non-partner organizations throughout the region as well, so that there is a bigger return on our initial investment."

Consultants from throughout the province made presentations on their completed project work in sustainable forest management planning, forest productivity and ecosystem-based management.

In addition to the nine presentations on the agenda, the event also featured a poster presentation on integrated visual design in the IFPA area. The poster session was led by Randy Spyksma of Forsite, the consulting company that completed the project

"The presentations were very high quality," said event organizer Ritchie Morrison of Tetrad Communications. "And although we had a slightly smaller crowd than usual, the energy level was up to the usual standard, with participants asking questions and providing comments throughout the day." Morrison added that some 175 project summaries were distributed at the event.

For those who could not attend the event but are interested in project information, the presentations are all posted to the M&L IFPA website at www.moricelakes-ifpa.com. Look under the news heading on the home page. Project summaries are also available in the publications section of the website.



A poster session was held on Integrated Visual Design in the Morice & Lakes area. Randy Spyksma of Forsite (project consultant) led the session (see graphic on page 1).



Busy Project Year: Several Publications Available on Website

Several continual improvement projects in core program areas were carried out by project consultants in the Morice & Lakes IFPA during the 07/08 fiscal year.

Sustainable Forest Management

Sustainable forest management (SFM) planning work in the fiscal year included the completion of Version 3.2 of the SFM plans for the Morice and Lakes Timber Supply Areas. Additional SFM work included:

- SFM indicator reporting and monitoring
- Lakes Sustainable Resource Management Plan
- Morice and Lakes TSA Analysis Sensitivities
- Communications and extension summary

Forest Productivity

A variety of projects were completed on the forest productivity front, including:

- Predictive Ecosystem Mapping Accuracy Assessment in the Morice & Lakes
- Site Index – Biogeoclimatic Ecological Classification

- Multi-Block Silviculture Standards
- Type II Silviculture Strategies
- Roads, Trails and Landings Inventory in the Morice TSA
- Integrated Visual Design Plans

Ecosystem-Based Management

Several multi-year projects, such as the northern goshawk and caribou studies in the region, were undertaken in the IFPA area in the 07/08 fiscal. Projects included:

- The Response of Caribou Terrestrial Forage Lichens to the Mountain Pine Beetle and Forest Harvesting
- Effects of a Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic on Northern Caribou Habitat Use
- Using Northern Goshawks as effectiveness indicators to evaluate SFM strategies and targets: Management for Goshawks

If you would like to read more on this project work, the table below lists projects available in pdf format on the M&L IFPA website.



# in Series	Project Title	Author	# of pages	Website location at www.moricelakes-ifpa.com
58	Communications and Extension 2004 to 2007	Ritchie Morrison, Tetrad Communications	4	publications/other
59	Morice 2007 Sensitivities Project	Dwight Crouse, Tesera Systems Inc.	4	publications/sfm/timber supply
60	SFM Indicator Reporting	Dwight Scott Wolfe, Tesera Systems Inc.	2	publications/sfm/plans and reports
61	Lakes Timber Supply Area Sustainable Resource Management Plan	David Stuart, Tesera Systems Inc.	4	publications/sfm/plans and reports
62	Roads, Trails and Landings Inventory Project Within the Morice Timber Supply Area	Dean Sinclair, Timberline Natural Resource Group	8	publications/forest productivity/harvesting and roads
63	Integrated Visual Design for the Morice & Lakes IFPA	Cherilyn Drew and Keith Turriff, Forsite	4	publications/other
64	The Response of Caribou Terrestrial Forage Lichens to Mountain Pine Beetles and Forest Harvesting in the East Ootsa and Entiako Areas	Deborah Cichowski, Caribou Ecological Consulting; Patrick Williston, Gentian Botanical Research; and Sybille Haeussler, Skeena Forestry Consultants	4	publications/ecosystem/wildlife habitat
65	Effects of a Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic on Northern Caribou Habitat Use	Deborah Cichowski, Caribou Ecological Consulting	4	publications/ecosystem/wildlife habitat
66	Morice And Lakes Timber Supply Areas Predictive Ecosystem Mapping Accuracy Assessment	Ken Simonar, Bio-Geo Dynamics Ltd.	4	publications/forest productivity/mapping and inventory

After the project analysis was complete, it was found that six of the VDUs could have pine harvested without special visual guideline constraints and still maintain scenic values. However, eight of the units needed a higher priority placed on visual landscape management techniques in order to maintain scenic values and facilitate salvage harvesting.

According to Spyksma the project was an important exercise in finding the right balance between resource uses: "It's a difficult balance to have both the positive economic benefits of harvesting as well as a nice view from the backyard," he said. Time will tell if this balance will be struck in the Morice and Lakes, but the IVD project is an important step in that direction.



Randy Spyksma delivers a presentation on Integrated Visual Design at the recent knowledge transfer session in Houston.

Partnerships Key in Land-Use Planning

Lakes North Sustainable Resource Management Plan

A detailed land use plan is being developed in the northern half of the Lakes Timber Supply Area (TSA). The Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB) is coordinating the plan in partnership with other organizations, including the Morice & Lakes IFPA.

The Lakes North Sustainable Resource Management Plan (SRMP) outlines biodiversity objectives and strategies for resource management in the northern half of the Lakes Timber Supply Area. The plan will apply to forestry activities outside of protected areas on forested Crown land in the area.

The SRMP, begun in 2004, is consistent with the provisions of the Lakes Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), which guides land use decisions and management intent in the Lakes TSA. The purpose of SRMPs is to establish legal landscape level objectives such as Old Growth Management Areas and Wildlife Tree Retention targets for biodiversity conservation.

"A key deliverable of the SRMP is legal biodiversity objectives that meet provincial standards," said Leigh-Ann Fenwick, a planning officer with ILMB in Smithers. "This is especially important in the northern half of the Lakes TSA, where mountain pine beetle infestations and salvage harvesting have a potential to adversely affect biodiversity."

The Morice & Lakes IFPA worked with the ILMB to develop a workplan and put a data sharing agreement in place. "The partnership is a good one for the IFPA," said M&L IFPA manager Jim Burbee. "Both parties benefit in the form of consistent planning, efficiencies and sharing of knowledge." Burbee added that the IFPA is planning on forming a similar partnership with the Ministry of Environment concerning hydrological objectives in areas affected by the mountain pine beetle outbreak.

The draft Sustainable Resource Management Plan is now completed. A 60-day public review and comment period is set for September and October of 2008. The final plan and its land use objectives are expected to be approved by January, 2009 and will be established under the Land Act.

Morice Scenario Planning Team Members

Arnold Amonson*	Local Business
Harry Anaka*	Agriculture and Range
Jim Burbee	Chair
Stewart Berg*	Guiding/Outfitting
Jim David	BC Timber Sales
Bryan Jacobec	Canadian Forest Products
Les Kearns*	Fishing Guides
Frank McDonald*	Non-motorized Recreation
Andy Meints*	Contract Logging
Jim McCormack	Canadian Forest Products
Rob Payne*	Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers of Canada
Sharon Smith*	District of Houston
Gary Thompson*	Mining
Jaret van der Giessen	Houston Forest Products
Glenn McIntosh	Canadian Forest Products
Dwight Scott Wolfe	Tesera Systems Inc.
Steve Wright*	Woodlots

Lakes Scenario Planning Team Members

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*Also a member of the M&L IFPA Public Advisory Group



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