

# 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 Northern BC. The Morice & Lakes IFPA aims to develop a Sustainable Forest Management Plan using innovative approaches in public involvement, forest productivity and ecosystem-based management.

### Local Community Seeking Forestry Solutions



*Scenario Planning Teams in the Morice and Lakes work on forest management scenarios.*

Innovation in how the community is involved in the forest management planning process is a central component of the Morice & Lakes Innovative Forest Practices Agreement. The Sustainable Forest Management Plan, which is the core document of the process, features input from Scenario Planning Teams and Public Advisory Groups as well as the general public.

These advisory groups and teams are comprised of interested members of the public and resource professionals representing a variety of interests (see complete list on page 4, as well as featured participants). Their task is to identify interests and values associated with the forest and to develop and evaluate scenarios for sustainable resource management. They are assisted in this process by technical expertise from contracted resource specialists and the IFPA's own Technical Committee.

This is time consuming work – planning teams in the Morice as well as the Lakes Timber Supply Areas have met in two-day

sessions twice each month to participate in this important process.

This planning work is being delivered with the assistance of Dwight Scott Wolfe and Steve Voros of The McGregor Group, a Prince George-based forestry consulting firm that has developed a sophisticated spatial analysis approach for sustainable forest management approach that is being adapted by the Morice & Lakes IFPA.

"We identified 160 resource values in the Morice and some 100 resource values in the Lakes," said Wolfe. These values encompass the full range of natural resources in the Lakes and Morice area, including recreation, wildlife, watershed, timber and biodiversity. Such abundance of information can be difficult to handle when it comes down to decision-making, however. "The data was a little overwhelming and we needed to make it more manageable," added Voros.

To address this volume of data, the Lakes and Morice Scenario Planning Teams

have worked under one roof for the past few months to consolidate resource values. "We temporarily combined the two teams from each TSA and went through an exercise of rationalization," said Wolfe. "The result has been to scale down the scope of the project to a more manageable size." Said Voros: "This will make it easier to complete the scenario modeling, which is the next step along the way to the Sustainable Forest Management Plan.

In scenario planning, participants formulate a variety of scenarios for managing the forest based on the resource values they have identified. Each scenario is then projected into the future using The McGregor Group's forest estate model to see how the forest will look if it is managed under each scenario. The goal is to find forestry solutions that work for all participants in the IFPA process. In the coming months a series of maps and reports will be prepared and different forest management strategies will be assessed, adjusted and in some cases replaced. The idea will be to develop a series of learning scenarios and a final decision scenario for each TSA. The final decision scenarios will form the basis of the Sustainable Forest Management Plan.

#### IN THIS ISSUE

- TWO** Bark Beetle Situation Factored into IFPA Planning
- TWO** Morice & Lakes IFPA Fire Patch Study Provides Valuable Data for Sustainable Forest Management Plan
- THREE** Planning Team Hits The Road
- FOUR** People and the Process

## Bark Beetle Situation Factored into IFPA Planning

The Morice and Lakes Forest Districts continue to be impacted by one over-riding forest management concern: bark beetle infestations and subsequent timber damage.

It is not possible to carry out comprehensive forest management planning in this area without taking into consideration spreading bark beetle infestations. It is estimated that some 5.7 million hectares (twice the size of Vancouver Island) and 900 million cubic metres of timber volume are at risk in the Central Interior. Southern portions of each district are overrun with bark beetle infestations. Both spruce beetle and mountain pine beetle kill living trees by laying eggs under the bark. A fungus enters trees with the beetle which inhibits nutrient circulation, causes a blue stain in the sapwood, and ultimately kills the tree.

"A central part of our focus on the Morice & Lakes IFPA is to model future forest conditions to aid in forest management decisions," said Jim Burbee, manager of the Morice & Lakes IFPA. "The beetle epidemic, which represents a huge agent of change in the forests of the Lakes and Morice Timber Supply Areas, must be factored into this modeling and all of our planning processes." IFPA committee members, management and consultants are all working with government ministries and local forest companies to ensure that up-to-date beetle information forms an integral part of IFPA forest planning efforts.

According to Steve Voros, senior resource analyst for the McGregor Group, data from the Lakes and Morice Forest Districts, specifically their bark beetle management strategies and overview maps, is essential to the success of the IFPA's Sustainable Forest Management Plan. "We need this district information to make our analysis meaningful," said Voros. The Lakes Forest District has been especially hard hit by the mountain pine beetle and B.C.'s chief forester recently announced a temporary doubling of the Allowable Annual Cut (AAC) in the district to help cope with the dead and dying timber.

One of the emerging problems in the Lakes Forest District is how to allocate beetle-infested timber to licensees and contractors so that it can be salvaged before it loses economic value. A further difficulty facing forest managers is to address the beetle problem – using primarily salvage harvesting - while still maintaining all values in the forest, including biodiversity, wildlife habitat and ecological integrity along waterways and other areas.

"We need to come up with ways of harvesting this wood without impacting non-timber values, like biodiversity and wildlife," said Voros. "It's a vital part of our forest management planning."

Voros will be working with his colleagues in the McGregor Group and with the Scenario Planning Teams in the Morice and Lakes on forest management strategies



*Beetle-attacked lodgepole pine stem. Pitch tubes and dust at the base of the tree indicate beetle presence.*

aimed at controlling the beetle spread while also mitigating damage to the environment values.

"The analysis that we'll be running will help us understand how much non-timber values will be compromised by harvesting and how long they will take to recover," said Voros. "This will point the way to future silviculture options."

According to Burbee, gathering data on beetle spread and management strategies is key, but additional projects are also being planned as part of the Morice & Lakes IFPA, including growth and yield in residual forest stands (trees remaining post beetle attack) and methods of improving beetle detection. For now, staying on top of current infestations and adding this information to planning efforts is a top priority in the Morice and Lakes IFPA.

## Morice & Lakes IFPA Fire Patch Study Provides Valuable Data for

A study of old wildfires is providing valuable insight on how forest ecosystems recover from large natural disturbances and how foresters can manage forests to maintain ecosystem functions and processes. Information gathered will assist in developing ecosystem management strategies for the Morice & Lakes IFPA.

The study examined six fires between 40 and 80 years old in the districts. Aerial photos and forest cover maps were analyzed for patterns in "fire skip patches" — unburned islands of timber in historic wildfire openings, explained Pat Brochez, operations forester with Cliff Manning Forestry Services in Burns Lake, which carried out the study.

Patches were measured and mapped for location, topography, aspect, shape, size, and biogeoclimatic zone. "What we have done is to overlay everything digitally," Brochez said. Subboreal, or local, forest ecosystems evolved under the influence of large and relatively frequent wildfires. Left behind were islands of unburned forest and irregular edges along openings, both of which provided valuable wildlife habitat.

Historic fires happened without human suppression, raging across the landscape until they ran out of fuel or were put out by rain. "Some of these fires are large, in the thousands of hectares," Brochez said. The largest in the study, the Paul fire

southeast of Houston, covered 7,618 hectares and contained 60 skip patches ranging in size from one to 245 hectares. Brochez said wide transition zones were found between fire openings and the forest. "There'd be these broad fingers that contained an increasing density of stems until you could call it a typical mature stand," he said. "Usually a fire doesn't just stop, it peters out. That's something that we don't conventionally do with a clearcut."

Although similar studies have been carried out elsewhere, it was the first of its kind in the Lakes-Morice. "We didn't have much information specifically for this area on

## Planning Team Hits The Road

After hours and hours of roundtable discussions on forestry and ecological concepts, it was time to leave the maps and discussion behind for a day and see some forest management practices on the ground. Members of the Scenario Planning Team for the Morice Innovative Forest Practices Agreement hit the road for a field trip at the end of May to better understand modern forestry and the terms being discussed at the table. The team has been busy drawing up resource values and objectives to include in “learning scenarios” and an eventual Sustainable Forest Management Plan, the central component of the Morice and Lakes Innovative Forest Practices Agreement. Meeting every two weeks for the last eight months, the team puts in an average of 40 hours a month.

“Meetings are really intense,” said Megan Wood, public advisory group coordinator. “People are learning new concepts all the time at these meetings around forest productivity. Instead of sitting in a room and talking about all these words, the Scenario Planning Team decided to go out and see on the ground what these things are.” About a dozen people took part in the day-long trip in Canfor’s Houston-Tommy chart area, located west of the Morice River.

“We thought it would be a really good idea to make a connection between those technical terms that we were discussing across the table and actually go out in the

field and look at some of this stuff,” said Carl Vandermark, planning superintendent for Canfor’s Houston operation and a registered professional forester.



*Scenario Planning Team members inspect fire-scarred remnant tree.*

Organized by Canfor, the tour took in a number of sites and introduced participants to a variety of on-the-ground forestry techniques, everything from buffer zones to biodiversity. One stop at the Swiss fire — what’s left after a giant forest fire in the 1980s — helped illustrate how thinning and other management tools can improve the commercial value of trees. Left alone the burned stand was dense and overstocked with pine.

Another stop at an unthinned, unmanaged site showed what that Swiss Fire stand might become if left untended. “It was an overstocked site that was marginally merchantable at 120 years,” Vandermark said.

By comparison, another stop showed a pine stand where thinning had reduced competition, providing growing space for target trees to grow in diameter and become merchantable timber.

Also on the tour agenda was the concept of biodiversity and how foresters include it in harvest planning.

“The basic assumption is that the more we manage as nature would manage, then the risk to other species is reduced,” Vandermark said. “Instead of putting a cookie-cutter approach of cutblocks across the landscape, we’re trying to put down a mosaic of different-sized blocks.”

Today planners set aside patches of forest in cutblocks to leave large, standing dead trees (called snags), and coarse woody debris on the ground. They also retain “stub snags” — trees cut off at five metres to provide wildlife habitat.

Participants consider the tour was time well spent. “I thought it was really beneficial,” said Sharon Smith, a District of Houston councillor and member of the scenario planning team. “It opened my eyes. When we make comments or when we’re discussing different terms it gives me an understanding.”

## Sustainable Forest Management Plan

the question of how large the fires were, and very little information on how much was left inside them in skip patches,” said Doug Steventon, wildlife habitat ecologist for the Prince Rupert Forest Region.

Size, shape and spacing of cutblocks determine how different age groups of forest will intermix on the landscape, providing habitat for wildlife. “How you [harvest timber] has been shown to be quite important for some critters,” Steventon said. Specific management techniques are used for specific wildlife species, but it’s impossible to include each form of life in harvest planning. Instead, a general approach is taken to preserve bio-diversity.

“At least on portions of the landscape you recreate the range of conditions that would have occurred naturally,” Steventon said.

To reproduce some of the effects of a wildfire, clearcuts would have to grow in size, the report suggests. Clearcuts today are generally less than 60 hectares because of Forest Practices Code constraints. “If we were seriously going to consider modeling forest harvesting after a wildfire, we’d need to harvest some larger cutblocks using a varied harvesting method,” Brochez said.

At the heart of the Morice & Lakes planning process is a complex computer program called the McGregor Scheduling

Model, designed to demonstrate each scenario’s effect over time. In this case, Data collected on historic wildfires will be fed into a complex computer program called the McGregor Scheduling Model. “We tell the model to go harvest as if it was a fire,” explained Laurence Turney, a Smithers wildlife biologist representing the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management on the IFPA Scenario Planning Teams. “What we’re trying to do is create a natural pattern of disturbance in the model to see what that does for all the other values.”

## The People and the Process



### Carl Vandermark

*Planning superintendent, Houston Operations*

Carl is a Registered Professional Forester who has worked in the Houston area

for the past 14 years. The last eight of those years has been with Canfor, Houston Operations. Carl believes innovative forest practices can create a more productive working forest and provide many benefits to the community. "It's crucial that we know what the productive capacity of the timber landbase is," said Carl. "Once this is known, we can balance economic, ecological and social interests to create a long-term sustainable plan."

Carl sees the scenario planning sessions as an important part of creating the best Sustainable Forest Management Plan possible. "Participants create the plan, they don't merely comment on it after it's been produced," he said. "It's also a learning experience for everyone. As a forester, ecological and economic side of forest management planning are my strengths, but the scenario planning sessions have given me a new perspective on the social aspects."



### Sharon Smith

*Councilor for the District of Houston*

Sharon has lived in Houston for 25 years and sees economic stability as a priority. "From a broad perspective I want to see a stable economy in the Houston area as well as economic growth in the future. I feel that the forest industry will be a vital part of this growth."

Working on the Scenario Planning Team has been both educational and challenging for Sharon.

"At first there was some uncertainty among participants, but through team-building we gained more confidence over time," she said. "It's also been a great learning experience."

And what about the Sustainable Forest Management Plan itself? "It's important to me that a plan not be a static document, it needs to be re-visited, re-evaluated and adjusted as the situation changes."



### Glenda Ferris

*Local environmental activist*

Glenda has lived in the Morice area for the past 29 years. As well as being an environmental activist she is a rural

landowner and brings this perspective to the table as well. "My husband Hap has also worked at the Canfor mill for 27 years and is a member of the IWA – I think I bring a balanced environmental approach to the process," said Glenda.

"We have been allowed to refine and improve this planning process and make it fit this area and this group of people. This is important to me. I also feel that it is vital to maintain a transparent process and report out to the community on our planning activities as much as possible. The bottom line for me is, the people who will live with this plan should be the key decision makers in designing it."



### Steve Voros

*Senior Resource Analyst with the McGregor Group.*

Steve is a registered professional forester and has been involved in the IFPA since it was first initiated in 1998. Based

in Smithers, he has been conducting forest level planning and analysis work for the past nine years. Steve has been there every step of the way, helping the scenario planning teams to identify values and ask the questions they need answers to. In addition, Steve will be preparing the information packages and analysis reports which document the data inputs and assumptions as well as the results of the analyzes which need to be completed in order to support the IFPA Sustainable Forest Management Plan. These documents contain the graphs, tables, maps and necessary explanations to help the scenario planning teams decide on final scenarios that will guide forest management activities in the Morice and Lakes TSAs.

"One of the unique things about the Morice and Lakes IFPA is the fact that we've brought together public stakeholders, approving agencies as well as the licensees into one room in order to set objectives for how they want to manage those two land bases up front, right at the beginning of the process."

## Morice SPT Members

<b>Mike Buirs</b>	Ministry of Forests
<b>Glenda Ferris*</b>	Local Environmental Activist
<b>Shirley Hamblin*</b>	Bulkley Valley Cattlemen
<b>Jim McCormack</b>	Canadian Forest Products
<b>Carroll Morey*</b>	Tourism and Recreation
<b>Rob Payne*</b>	Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers of Canada
<b>Ingrid Russell</b>	Ministry of Forests
<b>Sharon Smith*</b>	District of Houston
<b>Melissa Todd</b>	Houston Forest Products
<b>Laurence Turney</b>	Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management
<b>Jarred Vanderguisson</b>	Houston Forest Products
<b>Carl Vandermark</b>	Canadian Forest Products
<b>Steve Voros</b>	The McGregor Group
<b>Dwight Scott Wolfe</b>	The McGregor Group

## Lakes SPT Members

<b>Jim Burbee</b>	Chair
<b>Merima Domazet</b>	Ministry of Forests
<b>Bill Chapman</b>	Babine Forest Products
<b>Miles Fuller*</b>	Land and Resource Management Plan Co-Chair, Lakes District Woodlot Association
<b>Manuel Kindt</b>	L & M Lumber
<b>Jim McCormack</b>	Canadian Forest Products
<b>Tom Olafson</b>	Fraser Lake Sawmills
<b>Jim Peebles*</b>	Logging Contractor
<b>Jim Richard</b>	Ministry of Forests
<b>Russ Skillen*</b>	Lakes District Trappers Association
<b>Judy Stratton*</b>	Northern Ecology Watch
<b>Laurence Turney</b>	Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management
<b>Carl Vandermark</b>	Canadian Forest Products
<b>Steve Voros</b>	The McGregor Group
<b>Brian Walker</b>	Fraser Lake Sawmills
<b>Mike Watson</b>	Ministry of Forests
<b>Dwight Scott Wolfe</b>	The McGregor Group

\*Also a member of the broader IFPA Public Advisory Group

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

<b>Babine Forest Products</b>	<b>Houston Forest Products</b>
<b>BC Ministry of Forests</b>	<b>L&amp;M Lumber Ltd.</b>
<b>BC Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management</b>	<b>McGregor Model Forest Association</b>
<b>BC Ministry of Water, Land and Air protection</b>	<b>Natural Resources Canada</b>
<b>Canfor Corporation</b>	<b>West Fraser Mills</b>
<b>Decker Lake Forest Products</b>	<b>Village of Burns Lake</b>
<b>District of Houston</b>	<b>Village of Granisle</b>
<b>Forest Renewal BC</b>	

For further information on the Morice & Lakes IFPA, contact:

**Jim Burbee, RPF, IFPA Manager**  
C/o Tweedsmuir Forest Ltd.  
3003 Riverview Road, Prince George, B.C.  
V2K 4Y5  
Ph: 250-564-1518  
Fax: 250-562-1518  
Email: jim@netbistro.com  
Website: www.moricelakes-IFPA.com

Funding is provided by:

