

Morice & Lakes



IFPA



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Morice & Lakes Innovative Forest Practices Agreement

PROJECT SUMMARY

Ecosystem
Management

Forest Productivity

Public Involvement

Adaptive
Management

Developing and implementing a Sustainable Forest Management Plan for both the Lakes and Morice Timber Supply Areas is the central objective of the Morice and Lakes Innovative Forest Practices Agreement. The adaptive management cycle and public involvement are both important components of this planning process.

Sustainable Forest Management Plan Version One

Background

Developing and implementing Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) plans for both the Lakes and the Morice Timber Supply Areas is the central objective of the Morice and Lakes Innovative Forest Practices Agreement (M&L IFPA). The first versions of the SFM plans for each TSA were completed in December 2002 and represent a culmination of substantial effort. These SFM plans are based on significant public involvement, corporate and government initiative, and technical/professional expertise; all which helped shape the management strategies to accommodate a wide range of values and objectives on each TSA. It is recognized that the progression toward SFM is an evolving process, and as such, the SFM plans will continue to evolve through a continual improvement process. In this regard, subsequent versions of the SFM plans will incorporate the best available knowledge resulting from measures such as applied research, continued public input, and monitoring of performance indicators.

both the Morice and Lakes forest districts. Like other pilot IFPA projects in the province, the M&L IFPA is assisting industry and government in finding answers to difficult challenges facing British Columbia's forest industry.

Objective

The development and implementation of a Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) plan for each TSA is the central objective of the M&L IFPA. The SFM plans are based on three key elements of sustainability: social acceptability, environmental soundness and economic viability. Involving community stakeholders in the development of these plans is a key component—and innovation—of this IFPA.

The SFM plans detail various elements regarding the sustainable management of each TSA. This includes a detailed description of each TSA (i.e. physical attributes, current and anticipated resource uses), a description of the process used to develop the plans (i.e. public involvement, scenario planning, analysis, continual improvement process), and a detailed description of performance indicators with linkage to management objectives, implementation and monitoring plans. The SFM plans are also closely linked to the M&L IFPA Forestry Plan (a legislated requirement for all IFPAs), which outlines innovative activities that support M&L IFPA strategic objectives and continual improvement initiatives.

Introduction

The Morice and Lakes Innovative Forest Practices Agreement encompasses two Timber Supply Areas (TSAs), 2.6 million hectares, and a population of over 12,000 people. Six forest licensees operating in the Morice and Lakes TSAs joined this IFPA in late 1999 with the Ministry of Forests' Small Business Program in



Fraser Lake Sawmills



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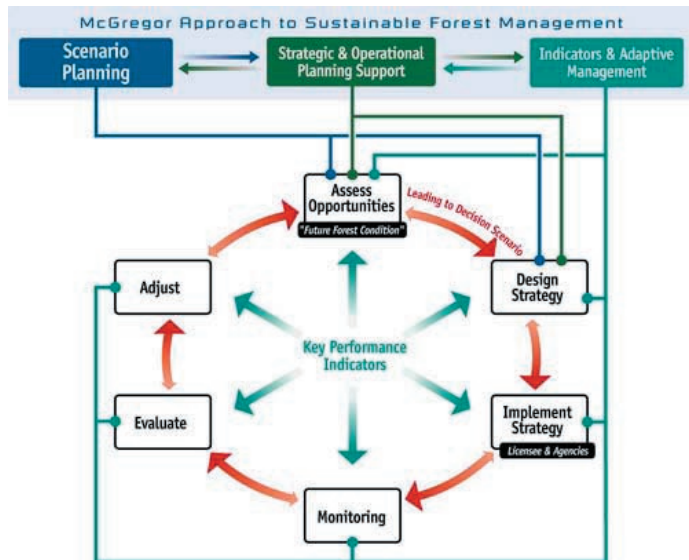


Figure 1. The McGregor Approach to SFM, illustrated relative to an adaptive management cycle (MMFA 2001, p.25)

Methods

The planning process used to develop the SFM plans is adapted from the McGregor Approach to Sustainable Forest Management (MMFA 2001). Originally developed by the McGregor Model Forest Association, this process has been enhanced and applied by Tesera Systems to meet the specific needs of the M&L IFPA. The process is based on a generic adaptive management cycle with additional features added to facilitate the development and implementation of SFM plans and systems (see Figure 1).

Within this planning process, public involvement and participation are critical. In the early stages, a public advisory group (PAG) was established in each TSA to represent various sectors of the community with specific interests and provide a forum for local input and feedback into the development of the plans. A scenario planning team (SPT) was also formed in each TSA and provided the opportunity for much greater “hands on” participation by public members in developing resource management objectives, strategies, indicators, and future forest scenarios necessary for the development of the SFM plans. The public component of the SPT was augmented with resource professionals and technical experts to provide a fully functional multidisciplinary planning team.



Figure 2. Public involvement through scenario planning is a vital part of the Morice & Lakes IFPA.

Using scenario planning, the team developed a series of future scenarios (i.e. learning scenarios) for the purpose of being able to accommodate and evaluate a wide diversity of resource management objectives. These learning scenarios include:

- Base case (current management practices);
- Forest Productivity (emphasizing timber values);
- Ecosystem-based management (timber harvesting guided by local ecosystem-based targets for patch size and seral stage that incorporate spatial and temporal natural disturbance patterns);
- Biodiversity (emphasis on landscape and stand level biodiversity values);
- Watershed (emphasis on watershed and riparian values);
- Wildlife (emphasis on species specific management objectives rather than landscape objectives);
- Recreation (emphasis on recreation, tourism and scenic values); and,
- Agriculture and Range (emphasis on agriculture and range values —for the Morice TSA only)

As part of the SFM system, each scenario is spatially forecasted through time using spatially explicit modeling tools. Through this process, participants can better understand the implications of various resource objectives since they can be readily compared and visualized over the landscape (using 3-D dynamic visualization tools based on the results from the spatially explicit modeling). The various scenarios can be evaluated and compared to one another using the performance indicators. This enables participants to objectively and quantitatively assess the various learning scenarios. As a result of this evaluation, participants gain a better understanding of the opportunities and/or consequences of certain resource objectives and, subsequently, they develop a “decision scenario” that best balances the variety of resource objectives.

Results

The first version of the SFM plans for both the Morice and Lakes TSAs was completed in December 2002. The development of the plans closely followed the methods outlined above. Management strategies for the plans were based upon SPT-defined scenarios. The SPT and the PAG were intricately involved during plan development, providing review, feedback and comments. Where possible, existing documents relating to local resource management were referenced in the SFM plans to ensure consistency with other processes (e.g. Timber Supply Review documents, LRMP documents, provincial legislation). Since performance of the plan will be based largely on the monitoring results of the SFM indicators, the greatest amount of time in preparing the SFM plans was spent developing details around each performance indicator (e.g. linkages to values/issues, indicator rationale, current status and targets, data sources, methods to collect and analyze data, implementation monitoring and reporting schedule). Public participation and input was critical in the development of these plans; this process ensured that the initial versions of the SFM plans met the expectations and had the full endorsement of the public advisory group.

These SFM plans, and the accompanying SFM system, were designed to fulfill multiple needs (e.g. SFM certification, legislated requirements, etc.), with the requirements for the IFPA Forestry Plan being the overall objective. Due to the number and complexity of the scenarios developed by the SPT, the timeframe to complete the decision scenario extended well beyond the timeframe required to develop the plans for IFPA requirements. As a result, the initial version of the SFM plan will utilize the “base case” scenario (i.e. resource management objectives that are currently required under the existing policy framework). Forecasts for the base case scenario are currently being modeled and indicator targets will be developed from these forecasts. Management practices will then be implemented to meet these targets.

Subsequent versions of the SFM plans will be based on the “decision scenario.” This will occur once all the analyses have been completed for all the learning scenarios, and participants have an opportunity to evaluate the learning scenarios and develop strategies for a decision scenario. Similar to the base case scenario that is currently being implemented, the decision scenario will be spatially modeled and forecasted throughout time, targets for performance indicators will be established, and management practices will be aligned toward meeting those targets.

As part of the continual improvement process (i.e. adaptive management), subsequent versions of the SFM plans will also incorporate information that is currently being researched to address data gaps, and to refine understanding. The M&L IFPA has developed a program of continual improvement projects based upon strategic objectives developed from the beginning of this process. These projects are summarized in the M&L IFPA Forestry Plan which is linked to and complements the SFM plans.

Discussion

For the general public, long-term forest planning has seemed beyond their reach in terms of their ability to participate in a meaningful way. This is not the case on the Morice and Lakes IFPA, which has demonstrated that capacity building can occur quickly and assure meaningful participation. A key lesson is to start small and build a knowledge base over time. Long term commitment and support of local communities can also be achieved through ongoing involvement in the adaptive management process.

The public involvement component used to develop the SFM plans also meets the consultation requirements of the major SFM certification programs. This approach follows the emerging trend of government becoming less involved in planning and is well suited to developing local-level partnerships for sustainable resource management. A commitment to report back to the local communities and regulatory agencies is another essential component of performance-based resource management.

The Morice and Lakes IFPA offers an effective model for communities to build capacity and participate meaningfully in the identification of local-level resource values, objectives strategies and indicators related to sustainable forest management

The completion of the first version of these SFM plans marks a major milestone for the M&L IFPA. It represents the culmination of much effort and consideration of how to best manage the multitude of resources and values in order to provide for the needs of the present and future generations on the Morice and Lakes TSAs.

To view the SFM plans, and other M&L IFPA publications, visit www.moricelakes-ifpa.com.

References

MMFA 2001. The McGregor Story: Pioneering Approaches to Sustainable Forest Management (ed. Scott, A.). McGregor Model Forest Association: Prince George, BC, Canada. 162 p.

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For More
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