
***TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMENTS
on the Pasquia-Porcupine 2015 – 2035
Forest Management Plan***

***Weyerhaeuser Company Limited &
Edgewood Forest Products***

Prepared by
Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment
Forest Service
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Acronyms

CBFA	Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement
CCFM	Canadian Council of Forest Ministers
EA	Environmental Assessment
EAB	Environmental Assessment Branch
EIS	Environment Impact Statement
EMU	Ecological Management Unit
FMA	Forest Management Agreement
FMAC	Forest Management Advisory Committee
FMP	Forest Management Plan
FMPD	Forest Management Planning Document (2007)
FMP Standard	Draft Forest Management Planning Standard (2015)
GIS	Geographic Information System
HVS	Harvest Volume Schedule
IFLUP	Integrated Forest Land Use Plan
Minister	Saskatchewan Minister of Environment
Ministry	Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment
NFP	Natural Forest Patterns
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
OSD	Old and very-old Seral stage Deferrals
PP	Pasquia-Porcupine
RAN	Representative Areas Network
SARA	Species at Risk Act
SGR	Silviculture Ground Rules
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
The EA Act	The Environmental Assessment Act (Saskatchewan)
TRC	Technical Review Comments
VSA	Visually Sensitive Area

Preface

The Pasquia-Porcupine (PP) Forest Management Agreement (FMA) area is approximately two million hectares in size and is located in the most southeasterly portion of the Provincial Forest along the central Manitoba border. The FMA area surrounds the communities of Hudson Bay, Cumberland House and Porcupine Plain, and is located east of the communities of Nipawin, Carrot River and Tisdale.

The Forest Service of the Ministry of Environment (hereafter the ministry) provides this document to assist with the public review of Weyerhaeuser Company Limited (Weyerhaeuser) and Edgewood Forest Products (Edgewood) proposed 20-year Forest Management Plan (FMP).

This document has six parts:

The first part provides an overview of the FMP review process and outlines the events and activities that led to the FMP being released for public review.

The second part provides a description of the FMA area. The third part provides a brief summary of the development being proposed, to assist the reader in deciding whether they are interested in finding out more about the proposed development. It is not intended to be a full representation of the development.

The fourth part of the document details the evaluation of predicted impacts of the proposed project, the effectiveness of any identified remediation and mitigation, and any follow-up requirements of the licensees recommended by the ministry - should the Minister of Environment (hereafter the Minister) approve the project.

The fifth part of the document presents the conclusions reached by the Forest Service. When making the final decision regarding the environmental acceptability of the proposed project, the Minister will consider information provided in the FMP, the public's comments and the Technical Review Comments (TRC).

The sixth part of the document provides information on how the public can view the FMP and the Technical Review Comments document and provide written comments to the ministry.

1. Environmental Assessment and Review Process

Introduction

The Forest Resources Management Act (FRMA) in Saskatchewan requires the licensees of a forest management agreement (FMA) area to develop a 20-year forest management plan (FMP). As a part of the forest management planning process the licensees have documented proposed forest management activities and potential impacts of those activities on environment. If an impact is identified, the licensees propose the mitigation actions. Once completed, the FMP undergoes both a technical and a public review prior to a decision being made by the minister regarding the FMP.

The FMP review process provides a broad understanding of the potential impacts and ways to minimize adverse impacts of the forest management activities.

The purpose of the FMP review is to ensure that the forest resources development proceeds with adequate safeguards for the environment and the sustainability of the forests and in a manner understood by and broadly acceptable to the public.

The Forest Service is the key regulator through the use of FRMA and its associated regulations. In addition, forestry companies in Saskatchewan must abide by all other applicable provincial and federal legislation (e.g. *The Environment Assessment Act, The Environmental Management and Protection Act, The Wildlife Act, The Parks Act and Regulations, The Wildfire Act, The Lands Act and Regulations, The Fisheries Act (Canada), The Navigable Waters Protection Act, The Shoreland Pollution Control Regulations*, etc.).

FMA area licence holders are required, under the FRMA, to produce a 20-year FMP. Recent changes made in the EA Act and the FRMA qualify approval of a 20-year FMP under section 39 of the FRMA as approval pursuant to the EA Act. Accordingly, for the purpose of this document, an FMP is equivalent to an Environment Impact Statement (EIS) as defined by the EA Act. Ministry roles and responsibilities during the assessment of the FMP have been established through an internal protocol agreement between the Forest Service and Environmental Assessment Branch. As defined in the protocol the Forest Service is responsible to assess the 20-year FMP pursuant to the requirements of the FRMA whereas the Environment Assessment Commissioner is responsible to ensure that Sections 9 through 15 of the EA Act are fulfilled.

Weyerhaeuser and Edgewood (hereafter the licensees) jointly hold the FMA licence for the PP FMA area. The amended PP FMA gives the rights to hardwoods to Weyerhaeuser, and the rights to softwoods to Edgewood, but requires the licensees to work together in preparing FMPs and operating plans. Weyerhaeuser holds the allocation of hardwoods and associated areas whereas Edgewood holds the softwoods allocation and associated areas. This assessment is for the new 20-Year FMP that will be implemented after the approval by the Minister. This new 20-Year FMP presents strategies for long-term forest management within the FMA for the 20-year term (2015 – 2035) and is retroactive to April 1, 2015. Site-specific activities

are addressed through the annually submitted operating plans. The public will have the opportunity to provide input and comments on those plans through a separate process.

The forest management planning chapter of the Environmental code (2015), FMPD and its revised draft (FMP Standard) are the main guiding documents provided by the Forest Service to develop the 20-year FMP.

Legal Framework of FMP Development

The Forest Management Planning Chapter of the Saskatchewan Environmental Code (2015) and the Forest Management Planning Document (FMPD) as well as its revised draft (FMP Standard) are the basic guidance documents provided by the Forest Service to develop a 20-year FMP. The FMP Standard incorporates natural forest patterns (NFP) and provides strategic targets to help manage the forested landscape to more closely approximate the characteristics of forest patterns found in a natural forest at both the stand and the landscape levels. The key forest attributes that are modeled in an FMP to approximate NFP include: appropriate age-class frequency distribution; event and patch sizes; interior forests; residual structure in young regenerating stands and mixedwood stands.

This FMP was developed using a hybrid approach. Licensees started developing the FMP under the guidance of the FMPD. During the FMP development the Forest Service began their revision of the FMP standard. Licensees have complied with many of the provisions in the revised FMP standard but kept the format of the deliverables as specified under the FMPD.

Submission of the Draft FMP

An FMP was submitted in the form of FMP Volume I, Volume II and other staged deliverables as outlined in the FMP standard. These documents as a package present analysis and explain how the forest will be managed and the risks to the environment will be addressed.

Public notice of the FMP process was issued by Forest Service on July 28, 2014.

The FMP evaluates the management strategies proposed and identifies actions to reduce potential risks to the environment. Specifically, the FMP identifies: methods to minimize or prevent adverse impacts caused by project activities, monitoring activities to ensure that predicted outcomes of the project are achieved and proposes contingency actions to be implemented in the event that the expected outcomes are not achieved.

FMP Volume I, which provides a brief historical review of the licence area, was approved by the Forest Service in 2009. Other deliverables such as digital planning inventory, forest development report, forest ecosystem modeling assumption document and modeling report, silviculture ground rules and transition rules were submitted by the proponent for review and approval-in-principle by the Forest Service during the planning process.

The draft Pasquia-Porcupine 20-year FMP was submitted to the Forest Service on September 18, 2015. It consisted of FMP Volume II and supporting Appendices. The

FMP Volume II document includes the highlights of the forest characterization report, forest development report, forest estate modeling report, public engagement reports, implementation strategies, and VOITs (Values, Objectives, Indicators and Targets). The tactical plan was submitted separately as Appendix I of the FMP volume II. It includes maps, by operating area, depicting where forest operations may be distributed over the next two decades and a document that describes how the tactical plan was developed. Deliverables such as FMP planning team terms of reference, workplan and public engagement plan are provided as Appendices in FMP Volume II document. These deliverables were submitted and approved by the Forest Service in the early stage of the planning process.

Technical Review

The TRC document provides a summary of the government's evaluation of the FMP.

The technical review stage of the process requires the ministry to examine the environmental impacts of the proposed 20-year FMP. In reviewing the FMP the Forest Service focused on:

1. Determining and documenting whether the information provided was sufficiently and technically accurate to support the public review phase of the process; and
2. Developing and documenting opinions about how the licensees addressed environmental issues associated with the project.

These technical review comments (TRC) have been prepared to assist the public and government decision-makers in their review of the proposed 20-year FMP. In preparing the TRC, the ministry focused on factors considered to be of primary significance to the proposed project and the environment within the project area.

For the technical review of the FMP, Forest Service identified subject matter specialists within and outside the ministry. Comments were collated and sent back to the plan author on November 23, 2015. The plan author submitted preliminary responses to the issues raised during the review on November 30, 2015. These were further discussed in an FMP planning team meeting held on December 2, 2015.

Public Engagement

The public review of the FMP will start on February 6, 2016 and will end on March 7, 2016.

The PP FMA area is close to the town of Hudson Bay and many smaller communities in the region and is heavily utilized for many values. Therefore, it is important that the planning process includes adequate public engagement. During the technical review of the FMP the ministry sought to ensure that the public and First Nations and Métis communities were provided adequate opportunities to express their concerns and provide input during the FMP development process. The input of local residents, Aboriginal groups, stakeholders and the general public ensures that the resulting FMP balances the need for sustainable economic benefits and the health of forest ecosystem in the licence area.

Once the technical review is completed the FMP along with the ministries TRC are

made available online for public review in the following location:
<http://www.environment.gov.sk.ca/ea2014-019>.

A 30-day public review period will begin on Saturday, February 6, 2016 and end on Monday, March 7, 2016. The public is invited to provide written comments on the FMP and the environmental implications of this development. To be considered, comments must be received by Monday, March 7, 2016. Please mail, fax or email written comments to:

Mark Doyle
Forest Management Planning Coordinator
Forest Service
Ministry of Environment
P. O. Box 3003, Prince Albert (SK) S6V 6G1
Phone: 306-953-2260, Fax: 306-953-2360
Email: mark.doyle@gov.sk.ca.

Please reference project number **2014-019** in the subject line (re: Weyerhaeuser/Edgewood 20-Year FMP).

If you need help in accessing the documents online, please contact the FMP Coordinator.

First Nations and Métis Consultation

The First Nations/Métis consultation process is ongoing. To date, no significant impacts have been identified.

Consultation with First Nation and Métis communities is an essential component of FMP development and implementation. In addition to the consultation associated with the FMP, opportunities for consultation will arise on an ongoing basis as the licensees seek approval of their detailed operating plans.

The ministry's duty to consult process is directed by *The Government of Saskatchewan's First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework (CPF)*. The CPF was approved by Cabinet in June 2010 and provides direction to all government ministries, Crown corporations and agencies.

The CPF applies to actions/decisions of government that have the potential to adversely impact the exercise of:

- Treaty and Aboriginal rights, such as the right to hunt, fish, and trap for food on unoccupied Crown lands and other lands to which First Nations and Métis have a right-of-access for these purposes; and
- Traditional uses of lands and resources, such as the gathering of plants for food and medicinal purposes and the carrying out of ceremonial and spiritual observances and practices on unoccupied Crown lands and other lands to which First Nations and Métis have a right-of-access for these purposes.

The duty to consult is triggered at a low threshold, which means that government consults on the basis of a “potential adverse impact” to a community’s ability to exercise established and credibly claimed Treaty and Aboriginal rights and traditional uses. The duty to consult is not limited to project specific decisions/actions with immediate impacts on land and resources. “Strategic, higher level decisions” like FMPs, which guide future decisions, may also have the potential to adversely impact Treaty and Aboriginal rights and traditional uses.

During the development of the FMP, the Forest Service identified and contacted 29 potentially impacted First Nation and Métis communities. These 29 communities were first notified in 2008 of the commencement of the Pasquia-Porcupine 20-Year FMP development.

Following the resumption of the FMP development after the 2009-2013 project hiatus (due to mill closures and economic downturn), the 29 potentially impacted First Nation and Métis communities were notified through a letter dated May 29, 2013 that work had resumed on the FMP. An official duty to consult letter was sent to the potentially impacted communities on April 30, 2015, to notify the communities of the availability of the Forest Estate Modeling Report for review. The letter included an offer to meet and discuss the Forest Estate Modeling Report and potentially associated impacts to Treaty and Aboriginal rights. The letter also included information on how to obtain funding to participate. No responses were received from the April 30, 2015 duty to consult letter regarding the Forest Estate Modeling report.

On September 3, 2015 the Forest Service sent a duty to consult letter to the 29 potentially impacted First Nation and Métis communities regarding the availability of the draft FMP Volume II document and Tactical Plan maps. The letter included an offer to meet and discuss the Volume II document and Tactical Plan maps and potentially associated impacts to Treaty and Aboriginal rights, along with information on how to obtain funding to participate.

Two of the communities contacted expressed an interest in meeting. These meetings were held in the communities on September 29, 2015 and November 17, 2015. For both of these meetings, the meeting coordinator from the contacted communities invited several of the previously contacted and potentially impacted local communities to attend. Both meetings were well attended, by the communities, the ministry and licensees. Meeting discussions were primarily around questions to the licensee about the 20-Year FMP, clarification concerning the ministry’s Duty to Consult versus the licensees’ public engagement processes, and a request to the communities to provide a general understanding of where Treaty and Aboriginal rights and traditional uses are being exercised in this area.

The two interested communities requested extensions to the initial October 16, 2015 deadline for response, to consult further and the ministry granted an extension to December 4, 2015. Contact through phone calls and email has been ongoing with the two communities; however, to date no specific geographic areas of concern or adverse impacts (within the scope of the duty to consult framework)

have been identified and therefore no accommodation strategies have been proposed. Upon request, the Forest Service is agreeable to a further extension (until March 7, 2016) and working with any of the 29 potentially impacted First Nation and Métis communities for the purpose of identifying adverse impacts arising from the FMP.

Ministerial Decision

Comments received during the public review of the FMP, together with information generated during the technical review, will be submitted to the Minister for consideration. The Minister, under section 39 of FRMA, may give approval to proceed with the development with any terms and conditions that the Minister considers necessary or advisable or the Minister may refuse to approve the development as proposed. Approval by the Minister pursuant to section 39 of FRMA is deemed approval pursuant to the EA Act. The terms and conditions that might be made as part of the approval process will be considered as part of the plan and their status will be kept up-to-date in the FMP registry and submitted as a part of the annual report to the public.

3. Setting the Context

Introduction



PP FMA area in Saskatchewan

The licensees have jointly submitted a new 20-Year FMP for the PP FMA area located in east-central Saskatchewan (see map on the left side bar). A 20-year FMP is typically revised every 10 years as a condition of the FMA. The last 20-year FMP, for the PP FMA was approved on April 19, 1999. It remains in effect until replaced by the new plan under development.

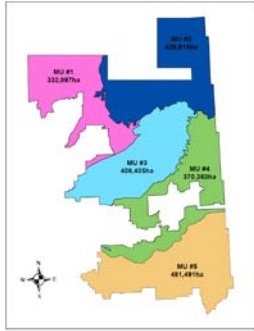
Since April 1999, ownership of the mills associated with the FMA and assignment of the FMA has passed from Saskfor MacMillan Limited Partnership to Weyerhaeuser. In October 2009, the FMA was assigned jointly to Weyerhaeuser and Edgewood, when Weyerhaeuser sold the Carrot River Sawmill and the Hudson Bay Plywood Plant to Edgewood. Weyerhaeuser retained ownership of its Hudson Bay oriented strand board facility. On April 1, 2012, the licensees signed an agreement to co-operatively manage the FMA area. The amended PP FMA gives the rights to hardwoods to Weyerhaeuser, and the rights to softwoods to Edgewood, but requires the licensees to work together in preparing FMPs and operating plans. Weyerhaeuser commenced the FMP revision process in November 2007 with participation from the Forest Service and received approval of their FMP Volume I on October 20, 2009. However, due to the softwood mill facility sales from Weyerhaeuser to Edgewood in 2009, the licensees requested a deferral of the FMP process until such time that Edgewood became established in the province. The ministry then granted the licensees an extension date of March 31, 2015 to complete and submit the remainder of their FMP deliverables. A further extension has been granted to complete the planning process by the end of March 2016. The new 20-year FMP is expected to be approved by March 31, 2016 with a retroactive date of April 1, 2015.

Pasquia-Porcupine Forest Management Agreement (PP FMA) Area

The PP FMA area is located in the most southeasterly portion of the provincial forest and shares its eastern border with the province of Manitoba. It encompasses approximately two million hectares (2,018,073 ha). More than half (54 percent) of the FMA area is covered by forests with the potential for commercial timber production, of which 869,605 ha is available for forest management. The area available for forest management is referred to as net land base in this document. The remaining portion consists primarily of wetlands, flooded lands, pastures, muskegs and non-forested areas.

Ecological Management Units

For the purpose of setting and tracking targets and goals at the forest management plan level, the FMA area has been divided into five Ecological Management Units (EMU). EMUs are composed of ecodistricts or groups of ecodistricts. Ecodistricts are characterized by the similar relief, geology, vegetation, soils and hydrology. EMU #1



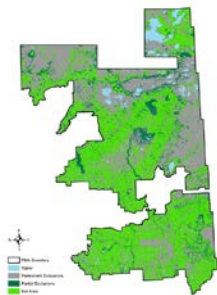
Ecological Management Units in the FMA area

includes Mossy River Plain (F1), Red Earth Plain (G19) and the Tobin Lake Lowland (G18) Ecodistricts. EMU #2 is completely within Mid-boreal Lowland Ecoregion and includes Namew Lake Uplands (F2) and Saskatchewan Delta (F3) Ecodistricts. EMU #3 includes Mistatim Uplands (G20), the Pasquia Escarpment (E27) and the Pasquia Plateau (E28) Ecodistricts. EMU #4 includes Hudson Bay Plain (G21) and Overflowing River Lowland (F4) Ecodistricts. EMU # 5 is made up of one Ecodistrict, Porcupine Hills (E29). Please see FMP Volume I document for details on ecodistricts, ecoregions (landscape units) and ecozones.

The FMA area has been divided into 17 operational units for operational purposes.

Parks and Reserves

The PP FMA area includes three parks (Cumberland House, McBride Lake and Ruby Lake), 17 reserves and a representative area (Woody River) that are completely excluded from harvesting activities. These permanent exclusions cover an area of 53,405 ha. It also includes a provincial park (Wildcat Hills) and 22 representative areas that are partially excluded from forestry activities. Partially excluded areas are used to meet non-timber targets such as old and very old forests. Partially excluded features cover an area of 162,027 ha.



Net area, partial exclusion and total exclusion in PP FMA area

Forest Types

Approximately 52 percent of the net land base is occupied by hardwood dominated stands, 29 percent by softwood dominated stands and 19 percent by mixedwood stands. For various reasons, about half of the FMA net land base is not currently available for harvest.

The forested lands in this area are dominated by a mosaic of even-aged pure and mixedwood stands. The most prevalent type of forests are black spruce, jack pine and mixed black spruce/jack pine representing more than 50 percent of the net land base, mainly in the central and northern portions of the FMA area. Mixed and pure white spruce and aspen forests occupy approximately 34 percent of the upland area and are more common in the southern part of the FMA area. Pure white spruce stands represent less than 2 percent of the FMA area.

Stands in the FMA are even-aged i.e. trees within a stand tend to be of similar age as they are of fire origin. When a fire occurs, the successional sequence of the burned area is set to a “zero” age-class and the area is assigned as young seral stage. While other disturbances such as insects and disease also cause trees to die, they, primarily, do it at a much smaller scale - resulting in several different seral stages occurring in the same stand. Residual green patches skipped by large wildfires can also lead to different seral stages.

In areas where fire is absent for longer period of time, forest stands mature and die. This process is called stand break-up. Dominant tree species tend to break-up and either an understory species takes over or the stand goes through some other

ecological succession process. The term seral stage is used to indicate the relative age of trees in a stand (young, immature, mature, old, and very old).

The longevity of trees in the boreal forest is relatively shorter than tree species found in other regions (e.g. temperate or tropical). On average trembling aspen, white birch or jack pine enter the very old seral stage at about 110 years (Table 1). Stands at this age start to break-up and reduce in timber value. While reaching very old age may reduce the timber value, the higher abundance of dead trees/snags and downed logs in these very old stands represent prime habitat for some wildlife species.

Table 1. Seral stage definitions by cover species group

Cover species group	Young	Immature	Mature	Old	Very Old
H and HS (Hardwood)	0-20	21-70	71-90	91-110	>110
jP leading stand (JLP)	0-20	21-70	71-90	91-110	>110
S and HS (Softwood not jP)	0-20	21-80	81-100	101-120	>120

One of the commercial advantages of the even-aged nature of Saskatchewan’s forests is that if one targets a certain age for harvesting, instead of having to selectively seek out individual trees, an entire stand is usually harvestable. The disadvantage of this type of stands is that they are collectively more prone to disease and loss of commercial value. This is particularly true as stands age and die, contributing dead limbs and organic materials to the forest floor as fuel for fires.

Biodiversity

Moose, elk, white tailed deer and woodland caribou are the large mammals found in the FMA area. Approximately 64 percent of the FMA area is within woodland caribou habitat range. Eighteen species of furbearing animals including wolves, black bears, lynx, wolverines, beavers and otters are also found in the FMA area. In addition, there are 25 small mammal species.

Often overlooked are the hundreds of smaller plant and animal species upon which the boreal forest ecosystem is built. In fact, large wildlife only contributes a small fraction of the biodiversity found in a forest ecosystem. More than 250 species of birds have been documented in the western boreal forest, with 147 species breeding in the PP FMA area. The majority of these migrate to South America and the Caribbean during the winter. There are four amphibian species found in the FMA area: the boreal chorus frog (*Pseudacris triseriata maculata*); the wood frog (*Rana sylvatica*); the leopard frog (*Rana pipiens*); and the Canadian toad (*Bufo hemiophrys*). The red-sided garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis parietalis*) is the only reptile recorded in the FMA area.

The Role of Fire

Historically, fire is the primary disturbance agent to reset the succession and the cause of the even-aged nature of most stands in the FMA area. Tree species such as jack pine are well adapted to fire as it heats the cones, which then release their seeds. Fire also helps to reduce the spread of disease such as dwarf mistletoe, which can affect forest health if large scale disturbances such as fire are suppressed.

Suppression of fire is necessary to protect life and property as well as the economic and social values of the forests. However, suppression of fire in past decades has created a forest mosaic with a higher proportion of old forests than historical present. Historically, the FMA had large amounts of young stands, moderate amounts of middle aged stands, and low amounts of old and very old forest stands. A downturn in the forest industry during the past decade has limited forest harvesting, further increasing the amount of old and very old forests in the FMA area.

Forest management can be used to emulate natural forest patterns within their natural range of variation. This is seen as an appropriate approach to closely maintain the age-class distribution of natural forests and to balance economic, social and environmental values of the forests.

Forest Renewal and Silviculture

Pursuant to the PP FMA, the FRMA and the Forest Regeneration Assessment Code Chapter, the licensees are required to ensure that lands in the licence area that have been harvested are renewed. Forest renewal encompasses silviculture grounds rules (SGRs) and treatment options intended to regenerate the forest after harvesting or natural disturbance. The licensees define these SGRs in the FMP to achieve the desired future forest condition.

Communities

Evidence suggests that Aboriginal people have used the resources in Saskatchewan's boreal forest for over 7,600 years. While there is some debate as to how long Aboriginal people occupied the area before European contact, Aboriginals now make up a significant portion of the population in the FMA area.

Hudson Bay, Tisdale, Carrot River and Porcupine Plain are major communities in the region. In addition, there are several First Nations, Métis and other communities within and near the FMA area.

Logging Roads and Trails

Most of the northern communities are resource-based, relying on forestry, agriculture, mining, fishing and trapping for their livelihood. Development of roads

and trails to access these resources is an integral part of the resource extraction. There has been a long history of road and trail development in the FMA area to enable logging and other resource extraction activities such as mining and agriculture.

Other Land Uses

Geological exploration and development, the demand for remote residences and hunting/fishing lodges, and an increase in recreational activities in the forest throughout the year (e.g. adventure and ecotourism) place additional pressures on the forests in the FMA area. These activities result in increased economic development but the impact of these activities on the ecosystem is not well understood.

Advances in Computer Modeling of Forest Growth and Wood Supply

New computer models have become available in recent years and continue to evolve and improve. These models allow forest managers to simulate the growth of the forest in smaller, more manageable areas such as management units. With new forest inventory information available, forest managers are now able to test different types of practices, such as different logging, planting and tending techniques, to see how a computer modeled forest ecosystem responds over an extended time at the landscape level. These tests allow for predictions such as how habitat can be maintained while still allowing the forest manager to optimize the timber supply.

Regulatory Environment

1. The Forest Resources Management Act

The Forest Resources Management Act (FRMA) strengthens Saskatchewan's commitment to sustainable forest management. FRMA provides the legal framework to ensure that an informed public has the opportunity to participate in decisions about forest use. FRMA ensures that the public will have the opportunity to participate in all levels of forest management planning.

2. Integrated Forest Land Use Plan

Traditionally, resource management planning tended to focus on a single resource element (e.g. trees, wildlife, etc.). In contrast, modern integrated forest resource management focuses on the principles of:

- maintaining the health of the forest ecosystem;
- considering all forest values both economic and non-economic in management decisions;
- ensuring that all those who may be affected have the opportunity to be involved in forest management planning in a meaningful way; and
- enhancing the flexibility of planning to allow for changing circumstances

and demands.

As per Section 39(1) (b) of FRMA, licensees must prepare the FMP in accordance with any integrated forest land use plan (IFLUP) in effect within the licence area. In June 1998, the PP IFLUP was approved by the government. The plan sets the stage for the development of the PP FMP. Key recommendations of the PP IFLUP include:

- a) Division of FMA area into three zones:
 - i) Resource protection area – with minimal or no disturbance allowed to serve as a benchmark against the area allowed for resource development
 - ii) Sensitive resource area – additional controls and restrictions applied to conserve areas sensitive to disturbance
 - iii) Resource management area – environmentally sound sustainable integrated resource development is allowed
- b) Public involvement in resource management:

Set up an effective public engagement process on an ongoing basis

- c) Resolution of conflict among multiple users of the resources:

Set up a conflict resolution mechanism for potential conflicts that may arise during the plan implementation

3. Summary of the Proposed Development

Introduction

This 20-Year FMP has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of *The Forest Resources Management Act and Regulations*, the Forest Management Planning Document (FMPD) and its revised draft version (FMP Standard), the Amended and Restated Pasquia-Porcupine Forest Management Agreement (2013), Forest Management Planning chapter of the Saskatchewan Environmental Code (2015) and the recommendations of the PP IFLUP (1998).

This FMP provides strategic direction for the management of the FMA area for the next 20-years. FRMA Section 38 (3) stipulates submission of a revised FMP every ten years.

This FMP was developed using the guiding principles of ecosystem-based management, sustainable forest management, engagement of the public, stakeholders and Aboriginal people, social and economic sustainability, adaptive management and continual improvement.

This section provides, in brief, the licensees' proposals for development of the FMA area over the next 20 years. Major developments include timber harvesting and renewal, access management and management of non-timber values of the forests including woodland caribou habitat. Public engagement at each step of planning process has been taken as a guiding principle. The licensees have proposed a package of 30 VOITs (Values, Objectives, Indicators and Targets) to monitor progress towards implementation of the FMP.

Public Engagement

Section 4 of the FMP Volume II document provides details on the licensees' approach to engage the public in the planning process. Extensive public engagement has taken place during the development of this FMP, including three rounds of public sessions that are documented in the Report on Public Engagement Meetings in Appendix E of the FMP Volume II document.

Values, Objectives, Indicators and Targets

Section 5 of the FMP Volume II document provides details on VOITs (Values, Objectives, Indicators and Targets) proposed in the FMP. A series of 30 VOITs have been developed to assist in monitoring adherence to commitments and assumptions made in the FMP. Appendix K of the FMP Volume II document will provide baseline information for relevant VOITs. Upon approval of the FMP, a Management Implementation Team (MIT) will be formed to assess compliance with these VOITs and the FMP registry. The FMP registry keeps the records and updates the status of the FMP approval conditions or commitments made by the licensees during the planning process. The licensees will report to the public annually on

A series of 30 VOITs are proposed for the purpose of monitoring the progress of FMP implementation.

progress towards achieving the targets.

Forest Estate Modeling

The current softwood allocation (450,000 m³/year) can be maintained for the next 10 years.

Section 6 of the FMP Volume II document provides highlights of the Forest Estate Modeling Report and a full report is provided in Appendix G. The Forest Estate Modeling exercise explored three different scenarios and ran sensitivity analyses on six different variables before arriving at the Selected Management Strategy (SMS). The three scenarios considered included: timber focused (baseline) scenario, NFP scenario, and NFP plus Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement (CBFA) woodland caribou scenario. The latter scenario was deemed as the SMS as it brings the forest age-class distribution closer to a natural forest condition within the next 30 years. Six variables considered for sensitivity analyses included the proportion of tamarack in the inventory (10 vs. 30 percent), proportion of in-block retention (5 vs. 9 percent), variance in harvest age and yield curves, managed stand yield gains, and regeneration delay.

The current hardwood allocation (840,000 m³/year) can be maintained for the next 20 years.

The SMS determined that the current softwood Harvest Volume Schedule (HVS) of 450,000 cubic metres (m³) can be maintained for 10 years before decreasing to 405,000 m³ for the next 10 years. The hardwood HVS of 840,000 m³ can be maintained for the 20-year term of the FMP (Figure 1).

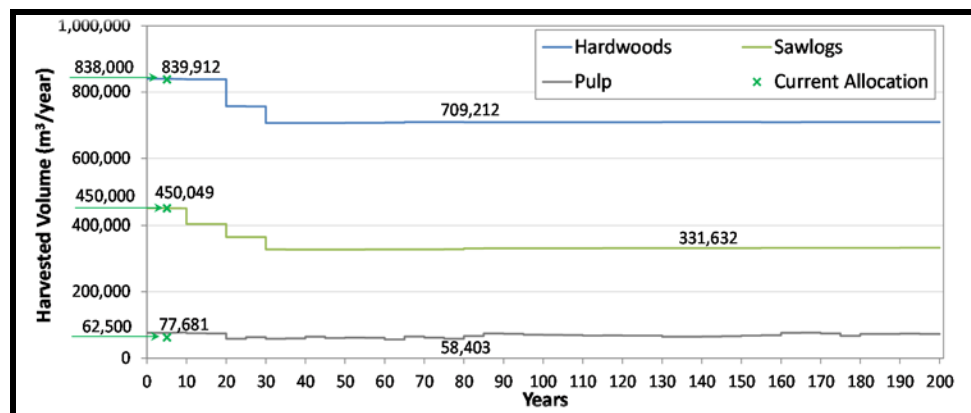
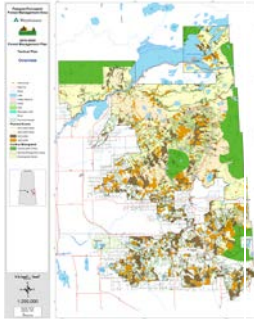


Figure 1. Forecast Harvest Rates for the Preferred Management Scenario – PP FMA

Tactical Plan

Section 7 of the FMP Volume II document provides an overview of the tactical plan and further details and maps are provided as FMP Vol. II - Appendix I. The tactical plan spatially identifies potential harvest areas and major road layouts for the next 20 years. The tactical plan was developed as an output of the modeling exercise with input by planners with knowledge of the terrain. One of the benefits of the spatial tactical plan is as a communication tool to the Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC), and at public and stakeholders meetings.

Although a FMP is typically renewed every 10 years, licensees have access to



Overview of the tactical plan

planned harvest areas for the entire 20-year term and a 15 percent variance in the plan is allowed. Over the next 20 years, approximately, 249,000 ha of forest area will be accessible for harvest by the licensees and up to half of this area is expected to be harvested over the next 10 years. Similarly, the licensees will have access to about 29 million m³ of timber and up to half of this timber is expected to be harvested over the next 10 years.

Section 7 of the FMP Volume II document also describes silviculture strategies and treatment options the licensees will utilize to fulfill their renewal obligations.

Harvesting will be carried out as per the NFP approach using a clearcutting system with variable green tree retention. Where immature white spruce trees grow in the understory of hardwood and mixedwood stands, “understory protection” will be applied. Depending on site-specific conditions the licensees will implement a variety of treatment options like “Leave for Natural” (no treatment), tree planting or scarification; with the objective of replacing the stands harvested with the same or similar relative species proportions that were present prior to harvest.

Non-Timber Forest Values

Section 8 of the PP FMP Volume II document details the strategies that will be used to integrate forest management activities with the wide variety of non-timber activities that take place on the FMA area. The licensees commit to continuing support of the FMAC. The licensees are further committed to working with other land users in the FMA area, with the PP IFLUP as the primary means of integrating non-timber forest uses with timber extraction activities. Major non-timber values of this forest area include berries, mushrooms, visual resources (lakes and rivers), recreation sites, watersheds, wildlife habitats, traditional uses of lands by First Nations and Métis communities, tourism and outfitting, hunting, fishing and trapping sites. The licensees are committed to consideration of all these values in the implementation of their FMP.

Forest Protection: Wildfire, Insects and Diseases

Wildfire management strategies and approaches are discussed in section 9 and strategies to deal with forest insects and disease are laid out in section 10 of the FMP Volume II document. Licensees are committed to work with the ministry on forest protection efforts in the FMA area.

Conserving and Maintaining Habitat for the Key Wildlife Species

Section 11 of the FMP Volume II document outlines strategies to conserve/maintain habitat for the selected species.

In consultation with the ministry, three indicator species of wildlife were chosen for inclusion in the forest estate modeling process, these being: moose, fisher and woodland caribou. During the term of the FMP, the amount of habitat available for

these indicator species will be tracked and reported at five-year intervals.

The licensees propose to divide the caribou range on the FMA into CZs as core habitat, SMZs as connecting habitat and buffer the CZs and DZs where habitat is not suitable for the woodland caribou. They propose to focus forestry activities in DZs.

Section 12 of the FMP Volume II document outlines the strategy to manage habitat for the woodland caribou and Appendix J provides a more detailed plan.

Woodland caribou have been declared a threatened species under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). A caribou conservation plan has been developed for the PP FMA area in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Working Group of the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement.

The FMP outlines a risk rating system to determine the calculated level of disturbance within the caribou range. This plan sets aside 296,075 ha (14 percent) of the FMA as Conservation Zones (CZ), deferring harvest in these zones for the next 20-years. Special Management Zones (SMZ), totalling 333,633 ha (16.5 percent), provide connectivity and buffers between Conservation Zones (CZ). Forestry activities within the Special Management Zones (SMZ) will be tailored to ensure that the integrity of the Conservation Zones (CZ) are maintained. Finally, Development Zones (DZ) contain less suitable habitat for caribou and are where the majority of forest management activities will be concentrated (Figure 2).

The licensees propose a risk rating system to determine the calculated level of disturbance within the caribou range.

The risk rating system includes a variable buffer approach to human-caused disturbances like linear corridors and harvest blocks. The risk rating has been proposed based on factors such as vehicle wildlife collision, access for hunters/poachers, displacement due to heavy use by humans/vehicles, travel barriers and the increased presence of predators.

The licensees also propose to conduct research and monitor the impact of the variable buffer approach to the supply of woodland caribou habitat within buffers.

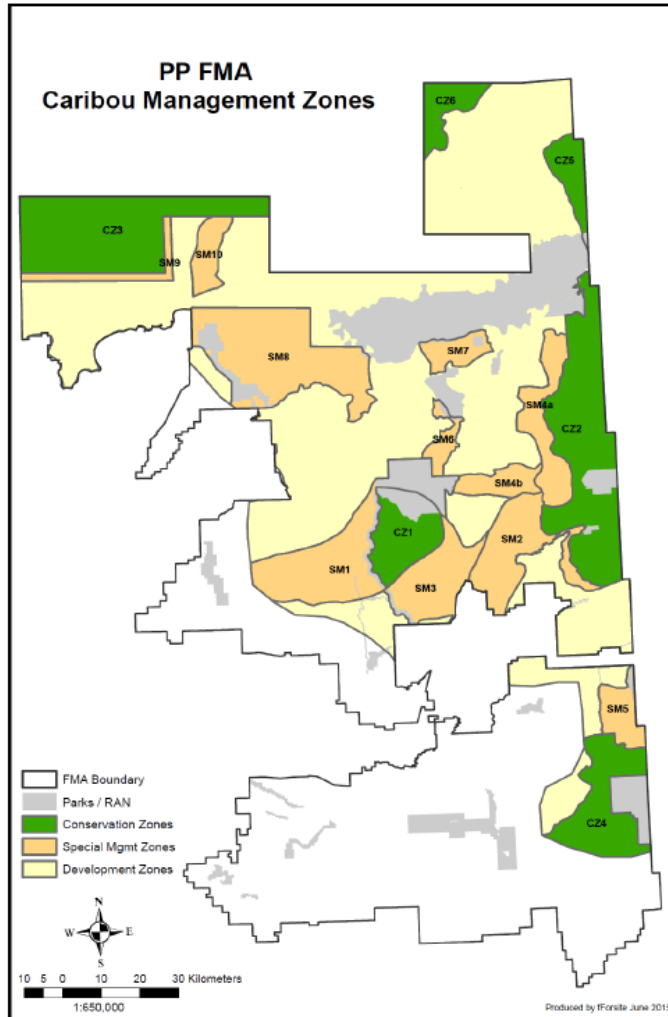


Figure 2. Pasquia-Porcupine FMP Caribou Management Zones

Major forest management issues identified by the licensees are woodland caribou management, climate change, engagement of the First Nations and Métis communities and implementing Natural Forest Pattern (NFP) requirements while balancing the mill demands.

FMP Implementation, Monitoring and Adaptive Management

Section 13 and 14 of the FMP Volume II document outline the FMP implementation, monitoring and reporting strategies. The licensees will work cooperatively to implement the FMP and follow the strategic direction contained therein. The FMA has been partitioned by the two companies for administrative purposes with each company retaining the responsibility to exercise their rights and to fulfill their obligations throughout the FMA.

A number of new planning requirements that could pose potential management challenges have been identified by the licensees:

- Assessment of the effectiveness of the woodland caribou strategy;
- Implementing NFP;
- Engagement of First Nations and Métis on forest management issues;
- Balancing the harvest to achieve mill requirements; and
- Climate change.

Implementation of the FMP will be monitored by the MIT through assessment of VOITs and reported in an annual report to the public.

Each of these challenges has been linked to an indicator in section 5 of the FMP Volume II document and will be monitored and reported annually to the public. The licensees also have internal mechanisms contributing to performance monitoring which include Environmental Management Systems (EMS), forest certification requirements, and silvicultural effectiveness monitoring. The licensees have committed to address them and expect that these monitoring and reporting measures will help mitigate the associated risks.

The licensees are committed to adapt the implementation of this plan as new knowledge, best management practices or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) become available. This FMP has been created using the best information currently available.

FMP Amendments

An amendment to the FMP may be triggered if the licensees exceed 15% variability from the tactical plan or a change in utilization more than once in a 10-year period.

Section 15 of the FMP Volume II document outlines in detail the FMP amendment process. An FMP amendment would be required if the variability from the tactical plan exceeds 15 percent within a planning period (10 years). Also, changes in the utilization standard (more than once in a planning period) could necessitate an FMP amendment. Finally, if more than 10 percent of the net land base area is burned within a planning period, a new planning cycle will be initiated.

Should an amendment to the FMP become necessary, a joint planning team (the ministry and the licensees) would be assembled and a workplan prepared. The PP FMP Amendment Log will be updated with information pertaining to the proposed amendment and public engagement would be required.

4. Technical Review Comments

The intent of the technical review process is to evaluate:

1. Licensee conclusions regarding the predicted impacts of the proposed project;
2. The effectiveness of any identified remediation and mitigation measures;
3. Additional requirements of the licensees recommended by the ministry.

Further, provincial foresters and experts in soil, water, plants, wildlife, and fisheries have examined the 20-year FMP in order to:

- determine whether the information provided by the licensees is adequate and technically accurate to support the public review phase of the process;
- develop opinions about how adequately the licensees have dealt with environmental issues related to their proposed approach to forest management in the FMA area for the next 20 years.

The FMP process differs from a typical development considered under the EA Act. Developed over a two-year period with active collaboration between the industry and the Forest Service, it is unlikely that significant outstanding issues would remain at the time the plan is ready for public review. However, the release of the FMP for public review should not be interpreted as all-encompassing agreement, on the part of the ministry, with the management approaches proposed in the FMP; but simply the view that any remaining issues can be managed through the ongoing regulatory relationship or terms and conditions that might follow from a decision made pursuant to FRMA.

In order to provide the public with an idea of the issues and questions encountered during the development of the FMP Volume II document, a summary of some of the reviewer's concerns, and the licensees' efforts to address them, are provided in the following section.

Background

The licensees submitted the first draft of PP FMA 20-year FMP (2015-2035) Volume II to the Forest Service on September 18, 2015. The Forest Service identified 19 experts across the government to review the FMP. In addition, Ecora Resource Group Ltd., a consulting company, was contracted to review the wood supply analysis.

Planning Process

In section 1 of the FMP Volume II document, reviewers noted the unique situation under which the plan was developed i.e. during the revision of the Forest Management Planning (FMP) standard. The reviewers suggested that the licensees highlight the situation and the licensees agreed, adding the following paragraph:

“During the time frame within which this FMP was developed, a new version of the

Although licensees started their planning process based on the FMPD, they have followed many of the new requirements of the FMP Standard.

Forest Management Planning Document (FMP Standard) was being developed by the Forest Service. The Planning Team cooperatively agreed to take a hybrid approach by incorporating important elements of the FMP standard and by removing some of the redundant requirements of the FMPD. An example of a new requirement is the NFP requirements which are a key part of this FMP”.

The licensees organized 57 public engagement sessions during the planning process.

Reviewers noted that the FMP Volume II document did not clearly distinguish between stakeholder engagement and the government’s duty to consult. Moreover, a summary of the licensees’ public engagement meetings was initially absent from the document. Licensees reworked the text to clarify the two separate obligations (engagement vs. consultation). A summary of the public engagement meetings has been included in the latest version of the Volume II document. Altogether, 57 public engagement sessions were held during the planning process. The Forest Service is satisfied with the public engagement process and the opportunities made available for public input into the FMP.

Forest Characterization

Adjacency and geographic similarities are the two main criteria used to divide the FMA area into EMUs.

In section 2 of the FMP Volume II document, reviewers noted that the document did not have adequate information on how the FMA area was classified into five EMUs. The licensees clarified with the following text:

“The main criteria used in grouping landscape areas into EMUs were adjacency and geographic similarity. Lowlands were grouped with lowlands and uplands grouped with uplands. EMUs were not to exceed 500,000 ha as per the FMP Standard”.

The Forest Service is satisfied with the revisions made in section 2 of the FMP Volume II document.

Forest Development Report

In the absence of appropriate yield curves, inclusion of low density stands could result in over estimation of the HVS.

While reviewing section 3 of the FMP Volume II document, reviewers questioned how the inclusion of “A” density stands would lead to an HVS overestimation. “A” density stands are those with crown closure between 6 and 25 percent as interpreted from aerial photography. The reasons that these low density stands exist on the land base are varied and run the gamut from low productivity sites to natural and human caused disturbances. Due to the limited amount of sampling done on these sites, the data was thought to be too variable for inclusion in the production of growth and yield curves and hence were excluded from the HVS calculation.

The Forest Service is satisfied with this explanation.

VOITs

In section 5 of the FMP Volume II document, reviewers noted that baseline information for the proposed VOITs was not provided. The licensees will submit the

baseline information for related VOITs, in a separate document, as Appendix K to the FMP Volume II document.

The licensees submitted 30 VOITs which will be monitored to track progress on implementation of the approved FMP.

Reviewers also questioned how the harvest event size target was set. The licensees described that they arrived at the event size target through analysis of historical patch sizes informed by the model output. Adjustments to the event size target were then made considering the new NFP rules and social and economic factors. Events that are too small are not economically feasible whereas events that are too large are socially unacceptable. The resulting harvest event size target is:

4 – 100 ha	17%
101-1500 ha	68%
1501-3500 ha	10%
3501-8000 ha	5%

Forest Estate Modeling (FEM)

The FEM report provides in detail how the modeling exercise was carried out.

In section 6 of the FMP Volume II document, reviewers noted that there was inadequate information provided on the SMS and the alternative scenarios considered during the modeling process. A trade-off analysis between a timber only scenario and the SMS was also missing. The licensees have since added further information on the SMS. CBFA’s variable width buffer process has been provided in Appendix J of the Volume II document. A complete FEM report has been provided in Appendix G of the Volume II document.

Modeling results show that there could be a higher harvest level over the next 20 years after which harvest levels will decrease by 15 and 25 percent for hardwood and softwood volumes respectively. Initially, no explanation for the harvest decrease was provided in the document. Licensees have since explained that the decrease is primarily due to the effect of fire suppression over the last 50 years. Fire suppression resulted in a greater area of old forest on the landscape. The SMS is aimed at restoring the age-class distribution to that of a more natural forest condition.

Reviewers noted that there was inadequate information on how new Visually Sensitive Areas (VSA) will be identified. Licensees clarified that forums such as FMACs and public engagement sessions held during the operating plan review will be used to identify VSA.

The Forest Service is satisfied with the revisions made in section 6 of the FMP Volume II document.

Tactical plan

In section 7 of the FMP Volume II document, reviewers noted that there were discrepancies in the tactical plan and the modelling assumption document such as minimum harvest age, old and very old seral stage deferrals (OSD) and area planned

The tactical plan spatially identifies potential harvest blocks, major road layouts and old and very old seral stage deferrals for the next 20-years.

for harvest over the next 20 years. The licensees submitted a GIS (spatial) dataset identifying areas of OSD and events for next 20 years but excluded any linkages to the planning inventory. The licensees are working on revising the tactical plan to include these attributes and linkages.

Reviewers questioned the methods used to delineate event boundaries in the tactical plan, block level and EMU level targets for the insular retention and inclusion of third party operator's expected harvesting in the tactical plan. The licensees are working on the tactical plan document to clarify these issues and the Forest Service is satisfied with the commitments and the progress made to date in addressing these issues.

Integration of Forest Management Activities with Non-Timber Uses

In section 8 of the FMP Volume II document, reviewers noted that commercial gathering of berries, mushrooms and fiddleheads is a growing sector. They had concern on how new non-timber forest product (NFTP) users will be made aware of the FMP and how their input will be received. The licensees will refer new NFTP users to the ministry field offices for guidance on regulations and will work with the new NFTP users to facilitate the harvest, whenever possible.

Reviewers suggested incorporating recommendations from the Saskatchewan Activity Restriction Guidelines for Sensitive Species. The licensees committed to incorporate the guidelines to help identify harvest season and buffer requirements in the riparian areas.

The Forest Service is satisfied with the revisions made in section 8 of the FMP Volume II document by the licensees.

Wildfire Management

FireSmart is a program which encourages and teaches communities and individuals to remove combustible material from proximity to dwellings and out buildings.

In section 9 of the FMP Volume II document, reviewers noted that the licensees are committed to suppress fires caused by their employees, agents or contractors. The licensees will conduct their forest operations pursuant to *The Wildfire Act*. Reviewers also noted that there was inadequate information provided on the FireSmart program. The submitted version of the FMP Volume II document provides further information on the topic.

The Forest Service is satisfied with the revision in section 9 of the FMP Volume II document.

Habitat and Wildlife Management

While reviewing section 11 and 12 of the FMP Volume II document, reviewers noted that there was inadequate information provided on tracking habitat for the indicator wildlife species and the impact of implementing the SMS on habitat for the indicator wildlife species, including woodland caribou. The licensees have

committed to track the supply of habitat for moose, fisher and woodland caribou over the planning period (VOIT #7).

The federal woodland caribou recovery strategy requires 65 percent suitable habitat to sustain a viable caribou population. The province is assessing the woodland caribou habitat in the boreal plain. A woodland caribou range plan is expected to be released by 2017.

Reviewers also noted that there was inadequate description of the Special Management Zones (SMZ). SMZs serve as connectivity between core habitat (CZs and RANs). Isolated SMZs were also connected with other SMZs or core habitat.

In Appendix J of the FMP Volume II document, reviewers noted that the FMP did not include a sufficiently robust plan to reclaim roads after harvest. The licensees will reclaim all new roads as soon as harvest and renewal operations are completed - as required by the provincial standards. The licensees requested to collaborate on a protocol that would see reclamation costs shared equitably and the concerns of roads users addressed by the ministry.

The federal woodland caribou recovery strategy requires 65 percent suitable habitat to sustain a viable caribou population. The province is assessing the woodland caribou habitat in the Boreal Plain in three stages (east, centre and west). A woodland caribou range plan is expected to be released by 2017. Until the range plan is complete, the disturbance levels in the caribou habitat in the Pasquia-Porcupine FMA cannot be put into context of provincial picture.

The licensees have proposed to defer harvest in CZs. They have also proposed a variable buffer approach.

In the interim, the licensees have proposed to defer harvest in all CZs. They have also proposed a, risk rated, variable buffer approach to human caused disturbance features. The licensees also propose to research the effectiveness of the variable buffer approach.

In the absence of the provincial range plan, the Forest Service is satisfied with the interim approach proposed. The licensees are aware that they may have to adapt their approach to woodland caribou management once the range plan is released.

FMP Implementation Strategy

In section 13 of the FMP Volume II document, the licensees identify potential challenges in implementing the FMP. Specifically, the licensees have identified required changes to the utilization standard and climate change impacts as potential challenges.

Utilization standards are a potential concern because frequent changes in utilization standards could have a negative impact on sustainability. To address this potential issue the revised FMP standard has introduced a section to address deviations to utilization standards during the term of the FMP and the licensees have reflected this new standard requirement within their VOITs.

The licensees are committed to adaptive management and reflecting new scientific knowledge into their SOPs. The licensees have suggested using the onset and end of winter as a proxy to monitor the changes in operating seasons as a function of climate change. The licensees will collaborate with the Forest Service and other

partners to adapt to climate change impacts and use the CCFM gap analysis to focus efforts and identify the areas of highest priority.

The Forest Service is satisfied with the licensees' commitments.

Monitoring Programs

In section 14 of the FMP Volume II document, reviewers noted the requirement for licensees to detail the data to be collected, frequency of collection, data collection methods and the reporting purpose for which the data will be used (VOITs vs. FMP registry). The licensees have committed to work out these details with the MIT.

The licensees have identified the data, sources and reporting format to track the progress made towards achieving VOITs. This report will be part of their annual report to the public.

Reviewers also noted that silvicultural treatments listed in the FMP Volume II were not adequately defined and treatment specifics such as planting density, species, treatment targets and goals were not provided. Specifically, reviewers noted that the proposed treatment to regenerate hardwood-leading trembling aspen-white spruce mixedwoods (described as AU 500 HS-tA_wS) is unlikely to support the transition to the future type as described in the forest estate modeling. The licensees have, in turn, supplied more comprehensive treatment descriptions and will work with the Forest Service to identify an appropriate silviculture treatment for the AU 500 HS-tA_wS forest type.

Further, as new information becomes available (e.g. regeneration assessment surveys or artificial regeneration research), the licensees have committed to adapt their treatment options, as necessary.

The Forest Service is satisfied with the revision made in section and 14 of the FMP Volume II document and the commitments made by the licensees.

The MIT is a team composed of experts from government and industry that will monitor progress made in implementing the approved FMP.

FMP Registry (Environmental Registry/Obligation Table)

The following conditions from the 1999 FMP registry will be carried forward as approval conditions for 2015-2035 FMP and the status of each of these conditions will be provided in the annual report to the public. Most of the 1999 approval conditions were removed, because they were no longer relevant or were addressed through legislation, standards and regulations or elsewhere in the FMP. Table 2 will be appended if new approval conditions are imposed by the Minister.

Table 2. FMP approval conditions of the FMP 1999 carried forward as approval of the FMP 2015

#	General Description	Specifics	Comments regarding 2015 status	Reference	Ministry recommendation 2015
38	Water Resources	Maintain a stream crossing inventory, model results and crossing designs, inspection results, and mitigation measures for inspection or audit.	Status: This information is kept up to date and is available for inspection by the ministry Action: Continue with current crossing inspection, maintenance and inventory program.	1999 FMP Approval Condition 2.7.1(c)	To maintain the database over the planning period.
74	Rare and endangered species habitat	Ensure that suitable habitat for recognized rare and endangered species is identified before disturbance by forestry operations and that the area of suitable habitat is maintained or increased.	Status: The licensees will protect the known location of any recognized rare and endangered plant species from disturbance by forestry operations. The licensees are actively cooperating with the ministry in the development of a Woodland Caribou Recovery Plan, and will assist in its implementation. Action: A special features layer is maintained in the Weyerhaeuser GIS. This layer identifies rare plant and animal sightings as well as the location of mineral licks, dens, and stick nests. The SARA Registry is monitored for additions of species with staff and contractors being made aware of the species of concern. Sighting reports are forwarded to the Conservation Database.	1999 FMP	To be addressed through the incorporation of range plans into the FMP process.
94	Resource inventory	Provide basemaps, vegetation maps, sample data and the associated data management systems necessary for management and operational planning.	Status: In 2007, a six million dollar project was completed to produce a new forest vegetation inventory for the PP FMA area. Weyerhaeuser and Edgewood are continually working to improve the accuracy and quality of data contained in the Geographic Information System. Action: Ongoing	1999 FMP	To be addressed through data sharing agreement

5. Conclusion

This FMP is developed for the next 20 years and, as required by the FRMA, will be replaced with a new FMP after 10 years. The new FMP is required to extend the existing FMA.

The technical reviewers and the licensees feel that the proposed 20-Year FMP represents a sound approach to sustainable forest management based upon the current scientific knowledge related to sustainable forest management practices in Canada.

To address woodland caribou habitat the licensees have proposed to defer harvest in specific zones and proposed a variable buffer approach to the features, such as roads, by rating the risks related to woodland caribou habitat. Additionally, the licensees plan to conduct research on the effectiveness of the variable buffer approach. Since an assessment of the woodland caribou range in the Boreal Plain is ongoing, it is not possible to put the level of disturbance within the PP FMA area into the context of provincial picture. The licensees are aware of the possibility that they may have to adapt their FMP when the range plan is released in 2017.

Overall, the Forest Service is satisfied with the licensees' approach to developing this 20-year FMP. The Forest Service concludes that the public review of the FMP should now proceed. The public can provide input/comments to the plan as outlined in the next section.

6. Invitation to Comment

The public is invited to review the licensees' 20-year FMP and the Forest Service's TRC and to provide comments to the Minister.

The comments received during the public review period along with the TRC will be considered by the Minister in the decision under section 39(1) of the FRMA to:

- a. give ministerial approval of the FMP with any terms and conditions considered necessary or advisable; or
- b. refuse to approve the FMP.

If the Minister was to refuse the FMP, the licensees would have to resubmit a new 20-year FMP. Harvesting would continue under the existing FMA licence and the current FMP.

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