



ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT *Learning Forum*

a project of the Coastal First Nations Turning Point Initiative

Detailed Summaries of Land Use Objectives

Monumental Cedar

Both Ministerial Orders identify that forest companies and the provincial government have a responsibility to work with First Nations to identify the amount and quality of monumental cedar needed to support the First Nation's present and future cultural use of monumental cedar, to the extent possible. Monumental cedar is defined as cedar that meets First Nations cultural needs (such as for canoes, poles, house logs, and carvings).

In the Central and North Coast Ministerial Order, in areas where a company plans to build roads and/or log, the company is required to identify and reserve monumental cedars *if* the First Nation has identified that those cedar trees might be important for cultural use.

However, the monumental cedar trees might still be logged if discussions with the First Nation determines that one or more of the following is true:

- the cedar is not needed by the First Nation for cultural use
- the cedar will be cut and delivered to the First Nation for cultural use
- the company needs to log the cedar for road access, other infrastructure, or to address worker safety issues
- not logging the cedar would make logging the cutblock economically unviable (how this is determined is not explained by the order)
- enough cedar to meet the First Nations cultural needs has already been identified and reserved.

Based on these discussions, if a cedar is determined to be important for cultural use it is inevitable that logging or road-building would have a negative impact on the cedar, then the company needs to come up with specific ways to mitigate or “seek to accommodate” this negative impact.

Stand level retention of Western Red and Yellow Cedar

In both Ministerial Orders, these objectives require licensees to maintain enough volume and quality of western red and yellow cedar to support First Nations' cultural use of cedar, to the extent possible. At the site level, when licensees are logging mixed stands using a partial cut method (where some mature trees are left standing in the cutblock), the first 15% of trees retained must include cedar in the same proportions as it was found in the original stand.

Important fisheries watersheds

Both Ministerial Orders contain maps showing important fisheries watersheds that were developed by the Ministry of Environment and DFO, and are being revised by each First Nation through the DSP process.

Within these watersheds, the important fisheries watersheds objective applies a default 20% equivalent clearcut area (ECA), which means that at any given time, no more than 20% of the forested part of the watershed is in a state that is equivalent to a clearcut in terms of how it moderates the flow of water (including melted snow) through the watershed. Clearcuts, recent clearcuts, windthrow, and forests where many trees are killed by fires, insects, or disease can all be similar to clearcuts in terms of their ability to moderate water flow.

If licensees wish to log more than the 20% ECA, they are required to:

- Conduct information-sharing with the First Nation
- Complete a special watershed assessment to determine how much forest needs to be kept where within the watershed to maintain the natural flow of water throughout the watershed.
- If possible, develop a plan to monitor the impacts of logging activities while they are occurring.

High value fish habitat

Both Ministerial Orders require that licensees maintain reserve zones around high value fish habitat that are, on average, one and a half tree lengths wide. These reserve zones cannot be logged unless there is no possible alternative.

The Orders define High Value Fish Habitat as areas that contain critical spawning or rearing habitat, which include estuaries, wet floodplains, and “marine interface” areas such as kelp beds.

Landscape Level Biodiversity

Both Ministerial Orders require licensees to reserve areas of old growth forest in each landscape unit to meet specified representation amounts for each ecosystem. Old forest is defined as forest older than 180 years for the South Central Coast Order, and older than 250 years for the Central and North Coast Order. The target amount of each ecosystem that needs to be kept as old forest is listed in tables in the Orders, and varies from 12% to 68%. The targets are based in part on a ranking of ecosystems by how common they are across the region, combined with information about how often the ecosystems would be disturbed by natural factors like fires or windthrow.

When there is not enough old forest to meet a target, licensees must recruit younger forests rather than logging them, so that the forests can recover and provide old growth habitat in future.

The Ministerial Orders also require that if there is more than 50% medium-aged (“mid-seral”) forests in an ecosystem type in a landscape unit, licensees must develop a plan to address this problem within 80 years, by either logging some of those forests or recruiting them to old condition. Mid-seral forests are defined by age, and are older than 40 years old and range up to 80, 100, or 120 years old, depending on the ecosystem type. The intention of this objective is to prevent having too many medium-aged forests because they provide poor habitat for many forest-dependent creatures.

Red and blue-listed plant communities

Red and blue-listed plant communities are rare plant communities that are at risk of disappearing if they are further disturbed. They may be naturally rare or may have been made rare by human activities (typically past logging). Red-listed plant communities are so rare that there are typically 20 or fewer high quality occurrences of each community in all of B.C. The Ministerial Orders require that 100% of these red-listed plant communities be reserved, with up to 5% disturbance only if there is no other alternative for road access, other infrastructure, or to address worker safety issues. The Ministerial Orders also lists blue-listed plant communities; this list is a subset of the blue-listed plant communities “of special concern” in the region. 70% of the area in each blue-listed plant community must be retained.

Stand-level retention

Both Ministerial Orders require licensees to leave standing trees within cutblocks. The reason is to maintain structure and habitat elements so that the cutover area will recover more quickly and can still be used by many different types of plants and animals in the meantime.

The land use objectives require that when the cutblocks are larger than 15ha, at least 15% of the total area of trees within the cutblock must be kept standing, with at least half of those standing trees being within the cutblock boundaries. These trees should be selected to, as much as possible, contain: habitat element for species at risk; endangered plant communities; cedar trees; wildlife trees; and fallen trees (known as “coarse woody debris”) that provide habitat and nutrients. The stand-level retention objective is worded slightly differently in the two Ministerial Orders, and the South Central Coast Order makes an exception to the in-stand retention requirement for stands where the risk of windthrow is very high.

Grizzly bear habitat

The grizzly bear habitat objectives require that licensees maintain important grizzly bear habitat (called “sensitive” in the South Central Coast Order and “critical” in the Central and North Coast Order). In both cases, before a licensee can alter this habitat, they must obtain confirmation from a professional biologist that this would not have a negative impact on the quality of the habitat; where possible develop a plan to monitor the impacts of logging activities as they are occurring; and share information with First Nations.

The map of critical grizzly bear habitat has not yet been completed for the Central and North Coast Order, but it will be posted in September of 2008. It is likely that this map will not contain any grizzly bear habitat in the mid-coast.