

Douglas Fir Harvesting Guidelines

Timber Harvesting in the Interior Douglas Fir eco zone within Skeetchestn Traditional Territory

As the focus of timber harvesting within Skeetchestn Traditional Territory is moving from the higher elevation pine beetle blocks back down into the Douglas Fir component we expect dramatic changes to the silvicultural regimes employed within our Territory. Water and riparian function are the most important resource provided by our forest both now and in the future and as such Skeetchestn forests always have to be managed with this in mind. Timber production is also one of the important outputs of the Skeetchestn Forest and both the focus and challenge of our silvicultural program is to ensure that timber production is conducted in a manner that is both environmentally acceptable and economically viable over the longer term. The silvicultural program will need to balance all forest values including watershed values, timber production, and habitat values paying particular attention to the potential mid-term timber supply. In other words this strategy will have to take an eco-system based approach taking into account all symbiotic relationships.

The following broad strategies will apply:

- Cultural Heritage Overviews are required on all blocks and roads.
- CRMZs (50 meter management zones around all water bodies) are to be implemented and the accompanying constraints respected on all blocks keeping roads and landing areas outside these zones except where operationally impossible to do so.
- All large diameter snags and potential wildlife trees will be reserved from harvest wherever operationally feasible
- All old existing roads will be utilized wherever possible either as roads or as major skid trails except in cases where old roads have

sufficient advanced regeneration and other suitable access options exist.

- The impact of landings will be minimized keeping landings to a maximum 2 tree lengths in diameter and no less than 400 meters apart (requires skid distances of minimum 200 m)
- The deciduous component will be retained especially in riparian areas.
- The use of smaller, narrower profile, zero tail swing selection equipment is desirable.
- The use of “crown” cameras in feller-bunchers is desirable

- **Riparian Areas** –The protection of watershed values is the number one goal in the Skeetchestn Forest and as such the riparian machine free zone is 10 meters along streams and other water bodies and an additional 40 meter management zone subject to the constraints within Skeetchestn Cultural Resource Management Zones. Wildlife tree patches can be incorporated into these zones.

- **Windthrow risk** -Provisions to minimize windthrow risk must be an important component of the Skeetchestn Forest silvicultural strategy. These provisions will include pre-harvest assessments to identify potential risks as well as site specific modifications to harvest practices such as edge feathering. Removal of no more than 50% of the basal area at any one time should ensure a certain amount of windfirmness to the residual stand. Some blowdown will be permitted as a cost of preserving residual spruce and fir stands.

- **Spur roads** should be temporary in nature and designed, located and constructed to occupy the smallest possible footprint, while still incorporating adequate water drainage provisions. As the Skeetchestn Forest silvicultural strategy is based on repeated stand entry and as many spur roads will support recreational and other

access needs, these roads would generally be “put to bed” rather than fully deactivated following harvest. Wherever possible, roads should be located with due consideration to harvesting needs as well as general access stand tending and other purposes as identified in the Skeetchestn Forest access plan. Roads should not be located within Cultural Resource Management Zones (i.e. within 50 meters of water except to access stream crossings).

- **Predominantly Douglas fir stands:**

- Concentrate harvesting on 25 cm to 65 cm. dbh stems removing no more than 50% of the basal area of the stand in any one pass.
- Protect all smaller diameter and non merchantable stems and regeneration wherever possible.
- Retain fir vets as wildlife habitat wherever possible

- **Spruce and Douglas Fir Stands** – Group and single tree selection with openings permitted up to two tree lengths across. Harvest to remove maximum 50% of the basal area on a 30 year cutting cycle for medium sites and 35 years for poor sites. Identify and retain some old growth structure with wildlife trees and patches as part of an overall wildlife habitat strategy. Retain deciduous wherever possible as well as spruce less than 20 cm. having full crowns and Douglas fir less than 25 cm. dbh.

While harvesting within Skeetchestn Traditional Territory any deviation from these guidelines will require a written rationale.



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Chief Ron Ignace

Skeetchestn Indian Band

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