

## **SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT STAFF REPORT**

---

**TO:** Corporate and Administrative Services Committee – June 27, 2019

**AUTHOR:** Julie Clark, Planner

**SUBJECT:** BC TIMBER SALES (BCTS) OPERATIONS 2019-2023

---

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**THAT the report titled BC Timber Sales (BCTS) Operations 2019-2023 be received;**

**AND THAT the SCRD respond to the BCTS referral with the following comments:**

- 1. BCTS work with SCRD to develop a strategy for Suncoaster Trail protection before completion of cutblock design for TA0334- EGG 17, 18, 22, 23 and G051B4DG;**
- 2. BCTS continue to work collaboratively with Sunshine Coast Trails Society to inform plans for community trail restoration and safety work;**
- 3. Public safety measures be implemented to communicate forestry activity to recreational users, including signage posted on Suncoaster Trail and all community trails near or through cut blocks;**
- 4. In support of Species At Risk protection, if not already completed, SCRD recommends BCTS:**
  - a. Conduct a survey of wetlands, ponds near or within proposed cut blocks on the North Lake Map Sheet. Survey to be conducted in both fall and spring;**
  - b. Conduct a Bio-Inventory of the proposed blocks that indicate Critical Habitat values. The inventory should be conducted by a Registered Professional Biologist with Species at Risk experience during active time for local species. Bio-Inventory data should be used to update block design to mitigate impacts to Species at Risk;**
  - c. And share spatial data regarding Bio-Inventory and wetland survey data with the SCRD in ESRI Shapefile or Geodatabase format;**
- 5. In support of monitoring and protection for marine life near logging activity, SCRD recommends that BCTS commission eelgrass mapping in coastal and estuary areas near proposed logging activity in Jervis Inlet - Hotham Sound, Deserted Creek, Brittain River, as well as coastal and estuary areas of Howe Sound near proposed logging activity - Rainy River, McNair, McNab and Potlatch Creeks, and that the spatial data be shared with the SCRD;**

6. Ensure that both *shíshálh* Nation and Skwxwú7mesh Nation are consulted and that all harvesting-related activities undertaken comply with the *Heritage Conservation Act*;

AND FURTHER THAT SCRD's referral response be shared with the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, with an invitation to dialogue about:

7.
  - a. Integrated planning approaches for ecological integrity, conservation efforts and resource activity
  - b. Tools to track the cumulative effects of forestry and other resource operations on the Sunshine Coast
  - c. Protecting community water supply – such as a review of Community Watershed designation to include the protection of community and individual surface and groundwater supply

AND FURTHER THAT SCRD refers this report to *shíshálh* Nation Rights and Title Department and to BC Parks for information.

---

## BACKGROUND

BC Timber Sales (BCTS) is a Provincial Corporation that is responsible for harvesting approximately 20% of British Columbia's Annual Allowable Cut and operates under the legislative and regulatory frameworks of the *Forest Act*, the *Forest Range and Practices Act*, the *Wildfire Act*, *BCTS Regulation* and the *Wildfire Regulation*.

BCTS has a mandate to provide credible representative price and cost benchmarks through auctions of timber harvested from public land in British Columbia using sound forest management practices.

BCTS also has a mandate to harvest 313,027m<sup>3</sup> of timber annually in the Sunshine Coast Natural Resource District, which includes the area of the SCRD and qathet Regional District (formerly known as Powell River Regional District). To achieve its mandate, BCTS attempts to distribute the cut blocks across the Sunshine Coast, rather than harvesting 313,027 m<sup>3</sup> in one area at one time. This includes harvesting timber in Community (drinking) Watersheds. The harvest level is averaged over a five-year period and if not met each year, the level accumulates each successive year until it is met.

Each year SCRD receives a five-year operating plan from BCTS as a referral for comment. BCTS shares proposed harvesting and road building activities in order to understand stakeholder interests in advance of anticipated harvesting. Operational plans are guided by the Chinook Region's Forest Stewardship Plan, which is updated on a 5-year cycle. The current Forest Stewardship Plan provides direction for 2019-2023.

In response to the Operations Plans over the years, there have been a number of Board resolutions which provide direction regarding resource extraction in community drinking watersheds:

- In January 2000 SCRD Board adopted resolution 27/00, Recommendation No. 13 indicating that SCRD is not in favour of logging in designated community watersheds or watershed reserves.
- In March 2011 the Board adopted resolution 147/11, Recommendation No. 9 which stated (in part) that the SCRD does not support logging in the Dakota Community Watershed.
- In response to the 2017-2021 Operations Plan, the SCRD adopted further resolutions in support of protecting drinking water: that a clear limit of zero risk to drinking water quality be established to protect from impacts of sediment, turbidity and pathogens.

SCRD's long-standing position has been held for the purpose of protecting water quality to maintain safe drinking water. Staff review resource referrals with these resolutions as guiding principles.

SCRD and BCTS signed a Communication Protocol in 2014 (Attachment A) that guides Operations Plans referrals. In addition to other goals, the protocol is intended to strengthen communication systems between SCRD and BCTS by providing clarity regarding timelines, roles and responsibilities relating to annual referrals of 5-year operating plans. This assists BCTS in receiving feedback early in the process and SCRD to have early and meaningful discussion / involvement while BCTS plans are in formation.

In response to the operational plan referral, SCRD submits comments in consideration of local land use planning, environmental leadership, community interface concerns and other community interests. SCRD relies on data and feedback from a variety of sources to prepare comments, such as: Official Community Plans, Advisory Planning Commissions, Natural Resources Advisory Committee, Sunshine Coast Trails Society, species mapping, heritage protection, and trails.

#### *2019-2023 Referral*

SCRD received a letter from BC Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Doug Donaldson on March 29, 2019 following up on communications regarding Timber Sale License (TSL) for A93884 (Clack Creek) and A91376 (Reed Road). This letter (Attachment B) advised that the Clack Creek TSL would be advertised for auction and that Reed Road would be temporarily on hold while further discussions take place about a balanced management approach for that area. No new cut blocks are proposed on either of the Elphinstone or Chapman Map Sheets for the 2019-2023 Operations Plan referral, therefore those maps are not included in the referral.

On March 15, 2019, the SCRD received a referral from BCTS, Sunshine Coast Natural Resource District regarding 2019-2023 Operational Plan.

The purpose of this report is to obtain SCRD Board direction on the following:

- 2019-2023 BCTS Operations Plan referral comments from SCRD including concerns about impacts to Suncoaster Trail Phase 1 and other recreational areas, Species at Risk.
- Comments on SCRD's position on logging in Community (drinking) Watersheds.

## DISCUSSION

The 2019-2023 plan includes 65 cut blocks with an approximate total of 1012 hectares of forest in SCRD to be harvested by BCTS by 2023.

Of the 65 blocks referred, thirty (30) blocks were previously referred in the 2018-2022 Operations plan and thirty five (35) are new. The attached excel sheet (Attachment C) outlines the 35 new blocks, shaded in green and the 30 previously referred blocks, shaded in orange. The previously referred blocks are not reviewed in this report, however, last year's referral report is attached for convenience (Attachment D).

In previous referrals the majority of new blocks were in the fifth year of the operational plan timeline. BCTS has stated previously that it takes several years to design and engineer cut blocks. In the spirit of the communication protocol, this strategy provides an early and meaningful opportunity for feedback that could be used to refine the design of cut blocks. On the list of 35 newly proposed blocks, there is a high concentration of blocks that are proposed to be cut early in the 5-year timeline, some proposed to be cut as early as this fall:

Proposed Harvest Year	# of Blocks	Net area in Hectares (ha)
2019	10	65.9
2020	7	51.5
2021	7	51.3
2022	2	50.5
2023	9	205.3

Some of the new blocks proposed to be cut this fall will have impacts to the Suncoaster Trail, Phase 1.

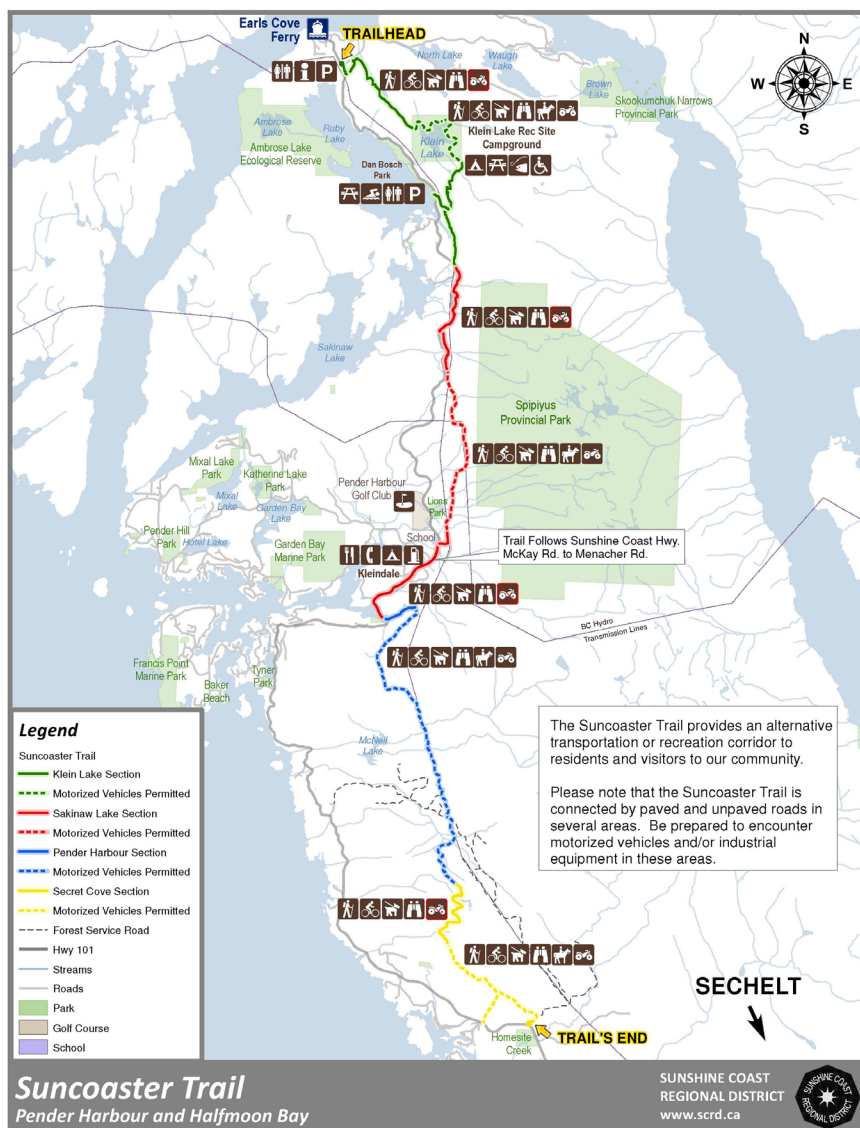
The newly proposed blocks to be harvested soon are in Electoral A, on the BCTS North Lake Map Sheet. The development and harvesting of these blocks are a partnership with Tsain-Ko, a

corporation of *shíshálh* Nation. As such, staff recommend this report also be shared with *shíshálh* Nation for information.

### Suncoaster Trail

The Suncoaster Trail is a community and tourism recreation resource that was created to promote recreation in wild nature close to developed communities. The overall vision for the trail is to create a ferry-to-ferry trail that connects Earls Cove to Langdale. Phase 1 of the trail exists between Earls Cove (Egmont) and Secret Cove (Halfmoon Bay) and is managed by SCRD.

Expansion plans are underway to develop Phase 2 of the Suncoaster Trail to extend to Langdale, completing the vision of a ferry to ferry trail. Pursuant to the *Forest and Range Protection Act*, a Section 56 designation for the whole trail is also intended. Suncoaster Trail Phase 1 has benefitted from significant community investment in the form of volunteer time and funds. Ongoing maintenance is provided by SCRD Parks Division. Currently, Suncoaster Trail is authorized as a Section 57-designated trail. This designation permits SCRD to construct and maintain trail but does not oblige forestry operations to protect or restore the trail as a Section 56 designation would. A Section 56 designation would also oblige SCRD to uphold Provincial standards for trails.



SCRD Board provided direction on April 25, 2019 (126/19) to further pursue developing Suncoaster Phase 2. To date, expansion efforts have been driven by significant community input. Suncoaster Phase 1 map shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Suncoaster Trail Phase 1

BCTS proposes to cut a series of cut blocks in partnership with Tsain Ko, at the northern end of Phase 1 of the Suncoaster Trail. These blocks are outlined on BCTS Map Sheet: North Lake. All of BCTS Map Sheets are publicly available for download from:

[https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/TCH/external/!publish/InformationSharing/DSC\\_Operating\\_Plan\\_2019-2023/](https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/ftp/TCH/external/!publish/InformationSharing/DSC_Operating_Plan_2019-2023/)

As proposed, four cut blocks abut or straddle Suncoaster Trail: TA0334- EGG 17, 18, 22, 23. The SCRD map below (figure 2) shows the Suncoaster Trail and the proposed cut blocks.

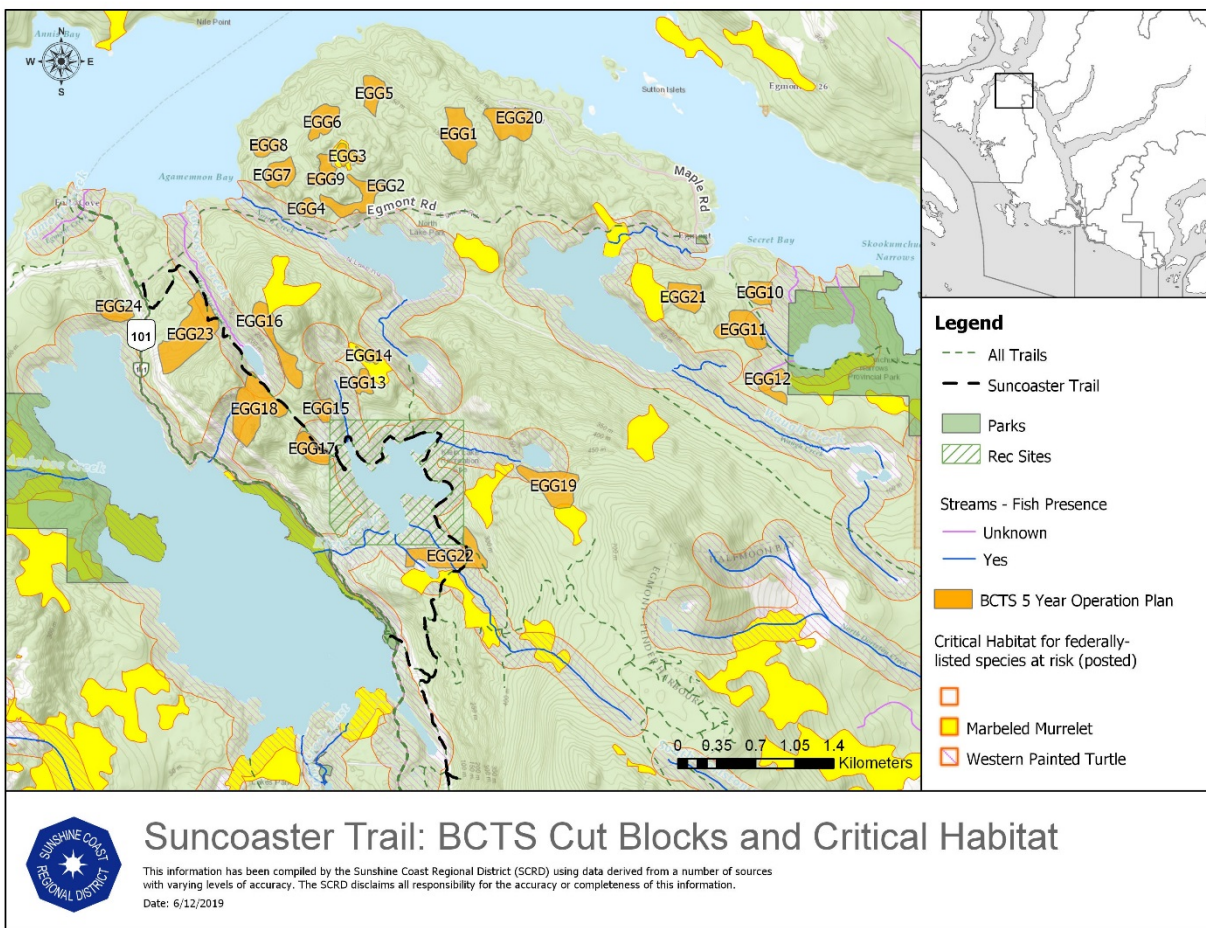


Figure 2. BCTS proposed cut blocks that would impact Suncoaster Trail are: EGG 23, 18, 17 and 22.

The estimated total net area to be harvested from the four blocks is 53.8 hectares (133 acres). The total combined length of trail impacted by the four proposed cut blocks is approximately 1.5km. Disruption to natural values that are key to the trail experience is a concern. Forest clearing on one or both sides of the Suncoaster Trail would make the Suncoaster a less appealing trail experience for those seeking wild nature close to communities. During harvesting there are safety concerns relating to forestry machinery on active transportation corridors.



In addition, there is concern about drainage impacts for trails and Forest Service Roads used to access trails. Reclamation and/or restoration, especially for Forest Service Roads used to access cut blocks is vital if they are also access roads for recreation. Damage to these roads can have long term drainage impacts and impact upon the public's use, enjoyment and access to recreation areas.

A short timeline exists to review and refine the blocks before proposed harvesting schedule. The table below outlines the harvest year as specified in the 2019-2023 Operations Plan referral. BCTS staff have communicated that some or all of these blocks are being laid out this summer for harvest this fall. This quick timeline does not appear to be aligned with the spirit of the communication protocol.

Further south, near Homesite Creek in Electoral Area B, the BCTS Sechelt South Map Sheet shows that the proposed block TA0545 abuts the Suncoaster Trail on the northwest side of the block. TAO545 has an estimated net area of 36.3 hectares proposed to be harvested in 2023. Approximately 40m of trail appears to abut this trail directly, while another approximately 290m of trail is less than 30 m away from the proposed GO51B4DG cut block.

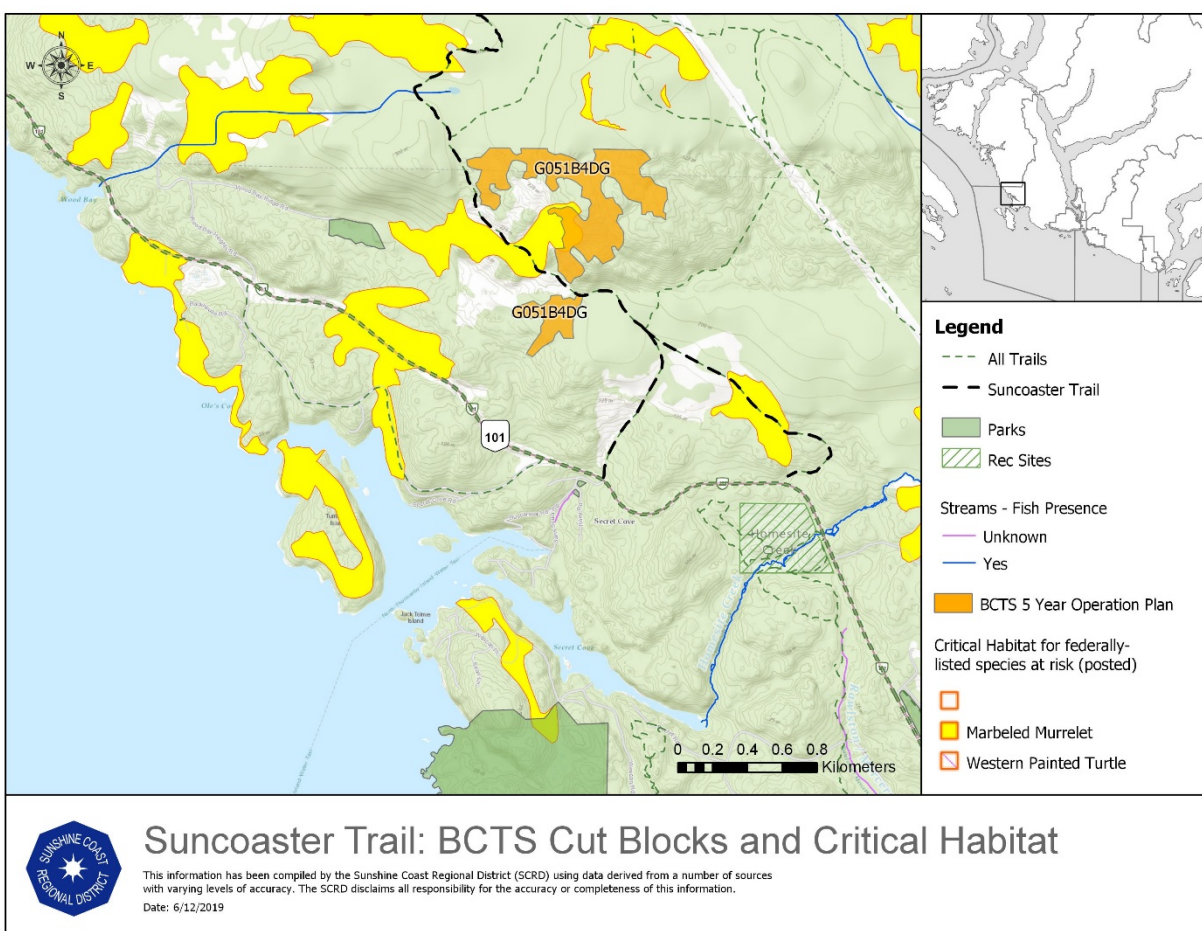


Figure 3. Suncoaster Trail, Critical Habitat and proposed cut blocks near Homesite Creek.

In addition to the impacts that forest clearing will have on the trail user's experience, there are specific concerns relating to each block as outlined in the table below (Figure 4).

Block	Harvest Year	Electoral Area	Estimated Trail Distance	Concerns
EGG 23	2020	A	433m	- Identified Critical habitat for Species at Risk: Western Painted Turtle
EGG 18	2020	A	511m	- Identified Critical Habitat for Species at Risk: Western Painted Turtle - Proximity to wetland/pond habitat slightly north west
EGG 17	2020	A	305m	- Identified Critical Habitat for Species at Risk: Western Painted Turtle
EGG 22	2019	A	283m	- Identified Critical Habitat for Species at Risk: Western Painted Turtle - Habitat values - Aesthetic – beautiful southern approach to Klein Lake Provincial Recreation Site - Impact to wetland / pond at south
F070B4DH (previously referred)	2019	A	50m	- Identified Critical Habitat for Species at Risk: Western Painted Turtle and Marbeled - Creek, unknown fish presence
Total length of impacted trail in Area A			2032m	
G051B4DG	2023	B		- Suncoaster passes NW and SW corner of proposed cut block, Homesite creek

Figure 4. Suncoaster Trail Concerns, proposed BCTS cut blocks and Critical Habitat.

Habitat concerns for Species at Risk are mentioned in the table above and discussed in a subsequent section of this report as the habitat concerns relate to other proposed BCTS cut blocks in addition to those with Suncoaster Trail concerns.

Effort should be made to ensure that Suncoaster Trail and the values it promotes are protected from logging activity. Four proposed cut blocks abut or cross the Suncoaster Phase 1 trail. According to the Operations Plan, one of these blocks are proposed to be harvested this fall. In recent discussion, BCTS staff have indicated other cut blocks may also be prepared for harvest this fall. There is urgency in requesting that BCTS develop a trail protection strategy with SCRD.



Staff see several options for BCTS regarding a trail protection strategy for Suncoaster Phase 1:

**Option 1** BCTS develops different blocks that are not near Suncoaster Trail,

or

**Option 2** BCTS redesigns proposed blocks with substantial buffers to protect the aesthetic and habitat values that the trail promotes

And that,

BCTS and SCR D discuss opportunities for BCTS to invest in the sustainability of Suncoaster Trail and access roads for example, funding bridge(s) at Vinebrook, phase 2.

#### *Other Community Recreation Resources*

Beyond the Suncoaster Trail, SCR D staff observe the potential for impacts to other valued recreational opportunities that are enjoyed by residents and tourists, such as the access trail to Skookumchuck Provincial Park and trails developed and maintained by the community.

For License TA0335, blocks EGG10, 11, 12 abut, cross, or are proximal to the access trail to reach Skookumchuck Provincial Park. Creeks and Critical Habitat values are also present in these blocks which are shown for harvest in 2020. SCR D recommends that BC Parks be informed about harvesting plans.

Trails maintained by the community are not detailed in this referral report as BCTS refers the Operations Plans directly to Sunshine Coast Trail Society for comment. Comments regarding trails from blocks that were previously referred can be found in Attachment D, the 2018-2019 BCTS Operations Plan PCD report.

Trails provide important opportunities to experience the forest. It is recommended that BCTS continue to work collaboratively with Sunshine Coast Trails Society to inform plans for trail restoration work and public safety measures resulting from BCTS logging or road building activity.

### Species at Risk and Habitat Values

The community values wild nature and intact ecosystems. Living near wild nature is part of our rural character, as is forest harvesting. The area included on the BCTS North Lake Map Sheet is home to many of the Sunshine Coast’s low elevation fresh water lakes and as a result holds unique habitat values for the Sunshine Coast.

In particular, this report draws attention to three Species At Risk known to inhabit this area whose populations may be impacted by the habitat loss and fragmentation of forest clearing: Western Painted Turtle, Marbeled Murrelet and Northern Red Legged Frog. These species are also particularly vulnerable to repeated drought associated with climate change that the Sunshine Coast is experiencing. The cumulative effects of habitat loss / fragmentation from forest clearing and climate change put these species further at risk. These are the only species that SCRД has spatial data for, there may be additional species to plan for in this area.

In Canada, the risk of individual species extinction is assessed federally on an escalating continuum: Special Concern, Threatened, Endangered, Extinct, Extirpated as outlined in Figure 5.

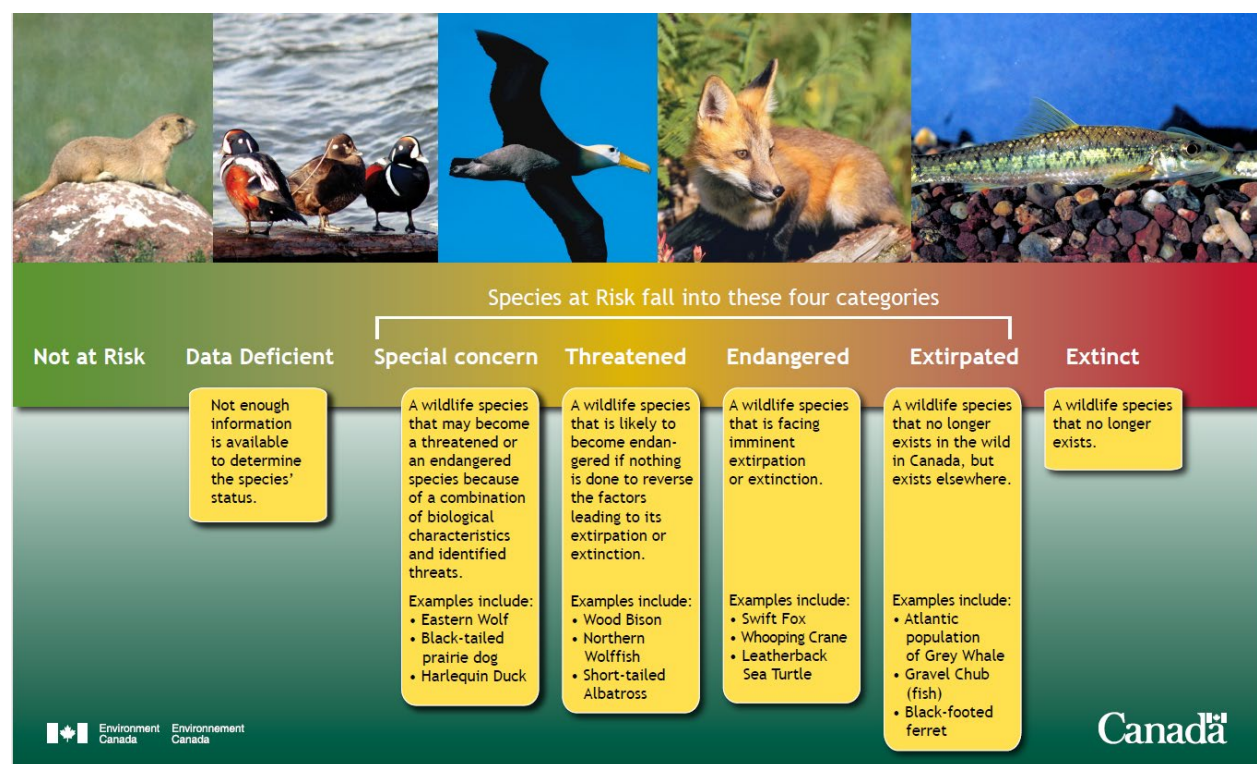


Figure 5

Assessments of species status are made by independent advisory panel to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada called the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). The *Species at Risk Act* protects these listed species on Federal lands. From there, each Province further develops their own species list and legislation. Any wildlife species thought to be at risk in a province or territory are often considered to be at

risk on a Canada-wide basis by COSEWIC. Differences may occur when, for example, a wildlife species is particularly at risk in one province or territory but more common in the rest of Canada.

Recovery plans or management plans are developed depending on the level of species risk. The strategies and plans provide species information, habitat requirements and identify the known threats. An outcome of the strategies is identifying Critical Habitat.

SCRD staff access the available Federal and Provincial spatial data for Critical Habitat of Species at Risk for technical review of resource referrals. The spatial data is a combination of 1) mapped potentially suitable habitat, 2) known nest sites, and 3) known occupied detections. Unless specific field data is detailed, these spatial layers are indicators to staff that field work by the proponent is a best practice next step to determine the presence or absence of species and habitat values.

In BC, Species and Ecosystems at Risk are coded and given a colour (Red, Blue, Yellow) to identify the level of concern about their risk, as outlined below:

<b>Red Listed Species:</b>	<b>Blue Listed Species</b>	<b>Yellow Listed Species</b>
Any species or ecosystem that is at risk of being lost (extirpated, endangered or threatened)	Any species or ecosystem that is of special concern	Any species or ecosystem that is at the least risk of being lost

British Columbia's *Wildlife Act*, *Forest and Range Protection Act* and the *Forest and Range Evaluation Program* provide limited opportunities to protect Species at Risk. Recognizing this, SCRD recommends that BCTS implement best management practices at each block to assess for Species at Risk and habitat values.

There is concern about the density of cut blocks proposed on the BCTS North Lake Map Sheet as it relates to the critical habitat of 3 Species at Risk: Western Painted Turtle, Marbled Murrelet and Northern Red Legged Frog.

Introductory information is provided below about each species:

### **Western Painted Turtle**

Small reptile whose habitat requirements are lake, wetland, sandy upland areas, each at different times of the year.

Status: SARA: Endangered, BC List: Red

Management or Recovery Plan: [Recovery Plan](#) (2018)

Habitat Information:

Main risks to their Sunshine Coast population:

- Loss of habitat due to development or industry
- Population fragmentation and barriers in migration corridors such as roadways
- Vehicle mortality impacts (inappropriately sighted roadways and lack of well monitored exclusion fencing with wildlife passage structures)
- Disturbance to nesting and basking sites from recreational activities and off-road vehicles.

### **Marbled Murrelet**

The Marbled Murrelet is a small seabird that spends most of its time at sea and within 0.5 kilometre (km) of shore. It nests in inland trees.

Status: SARA: Threatened, BC List: Blue (Special Concern)

Management Plan or Recovery Strategy: [Recovery Strategy](#) (2014)

Habitat Information:

- Marbled Murrelets are secretive and nest as solitary pairs at low densities, typically in old-growth forests within 30 km of the sea
- Main risks to their Sunshine Coast population include loss or fragmentation of nesting habitat
- In Canada, Marbled Murrelets are found only on Canada's Pacific coast
- The current Canadian population (estimated at 99,100 birds) is about 28% of the estimated global total of 357,900 birds The Marbled Murrelet was assessed as Threatened in 2012 by COSEWIC.

### Northern Red Legged Frog

The species is a small amphibian which has a terrestrial and aquatic life stages. Found in and around shallow ponds, lake margins, slow-flowing streams and wetlands, especially with intact mixed or coniferous forest communities of aquatic and terrestrial features.

SARA listed: Special concern, BC List: Blue (Special Concern)

Management Plan or Recovery Strategy: [Management Plan](#) (2017)

Habitat Information:

- Adults can be found well into adjacent forested areas as long as sufficient ground cover and moist micro-habitats exist.
- Breeding areas may be permanent or temporary and include ponds, lake edges, slow moving streams or creeks. Avoids deep open water and areas with little shade or cover. Egg-masses are most numerous in ponds with over 30% forest cover, within 200 m from the shore.
- Breeding, overwintering and foraging sites can overlap. Northern Red-legged Frog can hibernates in water and in surrounding forests.
- Main risks to their Sunshine Coast population: habitat loss or fragmentation, changes in hydrology and water temperature

Many of the proposed cut blocks are within or abut Critical Habitat for Western Painted Turtle and some abut or are within the Critical Habitat for Marbled Murrelet. At the time of report-writing, staff did not have access to spatial data for Critical Habitat for Northern Red Legged Frog, however their populations are confirmed in this area. In addition to Critical Habitat, staff have also highlighted creeks on the map, colour coded by whether their status as fish habitat is known or unknown. Please refer map to *Figure 2*.

The community of Egmont / Pender Harbour has been working hard toward the recovery of the population of Western Painted Turtles. The community rehabilitation effort is taking place in many of the wetlands and lakes at the north end of the Sechelt Peninsula. Community members have invested significant volunteer time in working with Sunshine Coast Wildlife Project to rehabilitate painted turtle nesting sites and provide community education regarding Western Painted Turtle species in the area. This work toward recovery of the endangered Western Painted Turtle is a demonstration of the community's value of the species and their habitat.

The table below summarizes the newly referred blocks that indicate Critical Habitat. The table also shows where creeks are present and whether fish are known to be in the creek or unknown at this time.



Block	Critical Habitat - Western Painted Turtle (WPT) - Marbeled Murrelet (MM)	Presence of Creek	Fish Presence Y (confirmed) U (Unknown)	Proximal to ocean
EGG 23	WPT	Y	Y	N
EGG 14	MM, WPT	N	U	N
EGG 16	MM, WPT	N	U	N
EGG 22	WPT	Y-2	Y-2	N
EGG 13	MM, WPT	N	U	N
EGG 15	WPT	N	U	N
EGG 18	WPT	Y	Y	N
EGG 17	WPT	N	U	N
EGG 24	WPT	N	U	N
G051B4DG	MM	N	U	N

The table summarizes areas with habitat concerns in Electoral Area A near Suncoaster Trail. The following newly proposed blocks also have habitat values (creeks, Critical Habitat) but are not near Suncoaster Trail: EGG 21, 11, 12, 19, 10, G053C39R, G053B4DP, G081B4QW, G081B4QY, G081B4TP, G053C39S, J012B4TZ, G053B4S1, G053B4S3, G053B4S9, G053C4J8, G051B4DG.

#### *Eelgrass and Forage Fish*

As per recommendations in 2018-2022 Operations Plan response, SCR D recommends eelgrass surveys and monitoring for proposed cut blocks that are proximal to ocean. The newly referred blocks in proximity to the ocean are on the Granville Bay Map Sheet: G081B4QW, G081B4QY. There are 8 previously referred blocks that are proximal to the ocean. For reference see Attachment B, the 2018 SCR D comments on BCTS referral.

In support of Species at Risk protection, SCR D recommends the following actions before final cut block design or harvest:

- Survey the locations of all wetlands in or near the blocks associated with licenses TA0333, TA0334, TA0335 to be shared with SCR D GIS Department

- Bio-Inventory of the proposed cut blocks be conducted by a Registered Professional Biologist with Species at Risk experience during active time for local species. Any Species at Risk and Critical Habitat should be identified. Bio Inventory data should be shared with the SCRD;
- Each block design should reflect the findings of the bioinventory and the habitat requirements of Species at Risk as outlined in each species' management / recovery plans
- Sunshine Coast Wildlife Project has field data and local knowledge about these areas that would benefit BCTS block design to mitigate impacts to Species at Risk.

### *2023 Cut blocks in Community (Drinking) Watersheds*

As with previous referrals, cut blocks continue to be planned within Community (drinking) Watersheds in order for BCTS to meet its mandate to harvest 313,027 m<sup>3</sup> of timber annually within the Sunshine Coast Natural Resource District. Cut block G053B4DC (Elphinstone map sheet, Electoral Area F), in Dakota Community (drinking) Watershed is scheduled for auction in 2022.

SCRD has previously opposed logging in Community (drinking) Watershed unless a strategy and monitoring program to ensure zero risk to drinking water is in place. Cut block G053B4DC is in Dakota Creek (drinking) Watershed.

### *Additional Water Concerns: Surface and Ground Water*

Surface and ground water impacts of forestry activity are potential concerns of residents who rely on creeks or wells as their drinking water supply. The *Water Sustainability Act* protects the quantity of water for license holders, but not the quality water.

The slopes of Mount Elphinstone above the highway in Electoral Areas D and E (BCTS Elphinstone Map Sheet) are not considered by the Province to be within a Community (drinking) Watershed as there is not a community water intake in this area. Many individual properties in this area depend on water from creeks or groundwater for drinking water. Without Provincial protections in place for surface and ground water quality, these licensees may be vulnerable to the impacts of upstream resource activity.

For a summary of the number of properties within and outside SCRD water service areas that have registered wells or surface water licenses, please see Attachment B, SCRD's 2018 comments on BCTS referral.

### *Comments to FLNRORD and BCTS:*

There is little ability to for local government staff to effectively assess the cumulative effects / impacts of resource activity as it relates to surface or groundwater, Species at Risk, biodiversity or other community values. As resource and development pressures increase on the Sunshine Coast, there is a critical need for a proactive, systems approach to planning for ecological integrity, conservation efforts and resource activity. Integrated planning for conservation corridors and contiguous tracts of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems are needed to support a thriving Sunshine Coast in a time of development pressures, resource activity and climate

impacts. The Sunshine Coast has a small amount of protected land (4.3%) by comparison to the provincial average (12%), on which to rely for ecosystem services and climate resilience.

SCRD appreciates the opportunity to review BCTS Operations Plans with a 5 year planning horizon. At the same time, and there is a challenge in reviewing referrals in isolation from other resource pressures on nearby Provincial land. Piecemeal information regarding other pressures on the land leads means a fragmented review and comments and potentially less comprehensive and strategic approach to solutions.

Staff recommend an invitation to the Province to dialogue about:

- Integrated planning approaches for ecological integrity, conservation efforts and resource activity
- Analysis tools to track the cumulative effects of forestry and other resource operations on the Sunshine Coast
- Protecting community water supply – such as a review of Community Watershed designation to include the protection of community and individual surface and groundwater supply

#### *Organization and Intergovernmental Implications*

The SCRД and BCTS signed a communication protocol on June 2, 2014. The protocol ensures that BCTS provides timely information about its operational plans and that the SCRД can provide comments back. Each successive year builds on previous years' plans as new field survey information is collected and stakeholder information is considered.

Staff will continue to work cooperatively with BCTS to identify future opportunities for community consultation.

#### *Timeline for next steps or estimated completion date*

As per the Communication Protocol, the SCRД has 90 days to comment. Staff worked with BCTS to extend the deadline to reflect SCRД meeting schedules. The deadline for referral comments from SCRД is July 5, 2019. Advisory Planning Commission and Natural Resource Advisory Committee comments will follow subsequently. This approach with Advisory Committee comments following has been used successfully in past years.

#### *Communications Strategy*

BCTS staff noted that it is most helpful to receive comments on cut blocks proposed for auction three to five years in advance in order to address comments during forest engineering and planning phases.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN AND RELATED POLICIES**

*Strategic Plan Values: Enhance Collaboration, Embed Environmental Leadership and Support Sustainable Economic Development*

The SCRCD is working cooperatively with FLNRORD and BCTS staff to provide comments and feedback on its proposed timber harvesting plans.

Forestry is part of the SCRCD's strategic priority to support sustainable economic development and embed environmental leadership.

## **Conclusion**

The SCRCD received the 2019-2023 Operational Plan referral from BCTS and will respond with comments as per the Communications Protocol by July 5, 2019.

SCRCD recommends BCTS develop a strategy for Suncoaster Trail protection before completion of cutblock design for blocks EGG 17, 18, 22, 23 and G051B4DG.

SCRCD supports continued collaboration between BCTS and Sunshine Coast Trail Society to ensure trail restoration and public safety measures are implemented for trails impacted by logging activity.

In support of monitoring and protection of Species At Risk, SCRCD recommends wetland surveys and Bio-Inventories to be completed for cut blocks where Critical Habitat is indicated. In addition, eelgrass surveys to be completed for cutblocks that are proximal to the ocean such as in Jervis Inlet - Hotham Sound, Deserted Creek, Brittain River, as well as coastal and tributary areas of Howe Sound near logging activity - Rainy River, McNair, McNab and Potlatch Creeks.

In support of protecting drinking water quality, SCRCD does not support logging in Community (drinking) Watersheds. Further, staff recommend taking the SCRCD's refined position on logging in Community (drinking) Watersheds to FLNRORD to request that clear limits of zero risk to drinking water established for logging Community (drinking) Watersheds.

Advisory Committee comments will be shared with BCTS subsequent to this report.

## **Attachments**

Attachment A – 2014 BCTS SCRCD Communication Protocol

Attachment B – Minister's Letter

Attachment C – Excel Sheet Summary

Attachment D - 2018-2022 Operations Plan Referral Comments Report PCD

Reviewed by:			
Manager	X- A. Allen	Finance	
GM	X- I. Hall X- R. Rosenboom	Legislative	
A/CAO	X- A. Legault	Other	

**Communication Protocol  
(The Protocol)**

**Between:**

**The Sunshine Coast Regional District  
(SCRD)**

**And**

**BC Timber Sales Strait of Georgia Business Area  
(BCTS)**

**(Collectively the Parties)**

**Preamble:**

- A.** BC Timber Sales plays an integral role in the implementation of government's Forestry Revitalization Plan and supports the Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) goal of providing British Columbians with sustainable benefits from the commercial use of public forests.
- B.** BC Timber Sales is a stand-alone organization within the FLNRO created to develop Crown timber for public auction to establish market price and cost benchmarks, and to capture the value of the timber asset for the public.
- C.** High-quality forest and environmental management practices are integral to the BCTS mandate and the way it conducts business.
- D.** BCTS manages timber assets in designated forest development plan units on the Sechelt Peninsula.
- E.** BCTS has an approved Forest Stewardship Plan and a Sunshine Coast Timber Supply Area volume apportionment which provide the legal authority to conduct harvesting activities within their designated forest development plan units.
- F.** The Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) is the local government serving the residents of the Sunshine Coast and provides a forum for the representation of regional residents and communities and acts as a vehicle for advancing the interests of the region as a whole.
- G.** A communication protocol will provide the SCRD an opportunity to review and comment on proposed BCTS harvesting plans and demonstrate to its constituents that it has awareness and knowledge concerning BCTS forest practices.



- H. A communication protocol will benefit BCTS by identifying important non-timber resources and community values so that BCTS planners can address them during the planning and conduct of forest operations.
- I. This Protocol is intended to assist in achieving stability and greater certainty for BCTS and to provide the SCRD the opportunity for early and meaningful involvement while BCTS plans are in formation.
- J. This Protocol is intended to strengthen the relationship between the SCRD and BCTS, based on effective working relationships, mutual respect and accountability.

**THEREFORE THE PARTIES AGREE AS FOLLOWS:**

**1. Definitions**

For the purposes of this Agreement, the following definitions apply:

- i. **“Operational Plan”** means a set of 1:20,000 scale map sheets depicting the timber harvesting land base, various forest attributes, existing and proposed roads, proposed cut-blocks, active and completed timber sales.
- ii. **“Timber Harvesting Land Base”** means the portion of the total land area of a management unit considered by the Ministry of FLNRO to contribute to and be available for long term timber supply.
- iii. **“Timber Sale licence”** means a defined area of timber subject to disposition provisions under the Forest Act within which timber harvesting activities are authorized by the timber sales manager.
- iv. **“Timber Sales Manager”** means the delegated decision maker with authority to make statutory decisions with respect to forest and range resources under provincial legislation.
- v. **“Sales Schedule”** means a schedule of timber sales intended for disposition by BCTS for a particular fiscal year. The schedule provides BCTS clients and other Parties advance notice of timber sale tenders.

**2. Purpose and Objectives**

The Purpose and Objectives of this Communication Protocol are:

- i. Assist with building a government to government relationship that will guide BCTS and SCRD engagement across a range of business focused on land and natural resource management in an efficient, effective and responsive manner for both Parties.

### **3. Scope and Parts of this Protocol**

- i. This Protocol consists of sections 1 to 7, and Appendices A, B and C.
- ii. This Protocol is in effect within the boundaries outlined in the attached Appendices.
  - a. Appendix A – Map of the Sunshine Coast Community Interface Area (SCCIA).
  - b. Appendix B – Map of BCTS Community Watershed Operating Areas
  - c. Appendix C – Map of BCTS Mt Elphinstone Operating Areas.
- iii. Land Use interests pertaining to Protected Area and Park creation or advancing moratoriums on Old Growth harvesting need to be addressed through other government planning processes and is beyond the scope of this Agreement.

### **4. Communication Process - BCTS to SCRD**

- i. In order to facilitate enhanced communications concerning BCTS forest operations, BCTS agrees to provide the SCRD Planning Department (SCRD) with their operational plans for the Sunshine Coast Community Interface Area (SCCIA), designated community watersheds and Mt. Elphinstone in a timely manner.
- ii. Operational plans will identify proposed harvest areas (timber sales) and associated access roads intended for disposition over a two to three year period.
- iii. Amendments and updates to operational plans are prepared periodically. BCTS will refer all new cut-block and road projections to the SCRD for review and comment.
- iv. BCTS will convey operating plans in digital PDF format. Sufficient and understandable information will be provided by BCTS to enable the SCRD to make informed comment.
- v. Meetings to clarify and resolve issues where possible may be advantageous at times and may be called by either party. Meetings will be held at the SCRD office in Sechelt on mutually agreed to dates and in exceptional circumstances may include field trips. The scope of the meetings will include discussions of timber sale and road construction projects at least one year in advance of operations.
- vi. A 90 calendar day referral period will be the normal track for operational plan review and comment.
- vii. BCTS will document and respond to SCRD comments demonstrating that it understands the issues and has fully considered them.
- viii. BCTS will post its Sales Schedule on their corporate website and will advise the SCRD when the schedule is posted. The schedule will identify the current fiscal

year's timber sale disposition plan and provide advance notice on the location, size, species profile and tender timing of timber sales.

**5. Communication Process - SCRD to BCTS**

- i. The SCRD intends to participate in any referral or information sharing with BCTS in relation to proposed BCTS operational plans.
- ii. The SCRD will provide BCTS information concerning recreational projects, infrastructure projects and information concerning other SCRD interests on the shared land-base.
- iii. The SCRD will communicate the nature of any possible impacts on SCRD interests as a result of proposed BCTS road and cut-block locations.
- iv. The SCRD may share BCTS operational plans with internal SCRD committees such as the Natural Resources Advisory Committee (NRAC), Planning and Development Committees and interested members of the public. Information/Comments derived through the circulation of BCTS operating plans to the groups noted above will be summarized into a response by the SCRD Planning Department prior to delivery to BCTS.
- v. The SCRD will maintain an awareness of the BCTS Strait of Georgia Business Area "Sales Schedule" posted on the BCTS corporate website for information concerning impending Timber Sale dispositions occurring within the consultative areas.

**6. Termination**

- i. This Protocol may be terminated should either Party feel the protocol is no longer necessary or not meeting their interests. Upon making such a determination, three months written notice will be provided by the terminating Party and a meeting will be held prior to termination of this agreement. This document will remain in effect until terminated.

**7. Amendment of Protocol**

- i. Any alteration or amendment to the terms and conditions of the Protocol must be in writing and duly executed by the Parties.

June 2, 2014

**Signed on behalf of:**

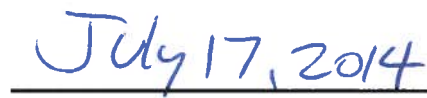
**Sunshine Coast Regional District**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Garry Nohr, Chair**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

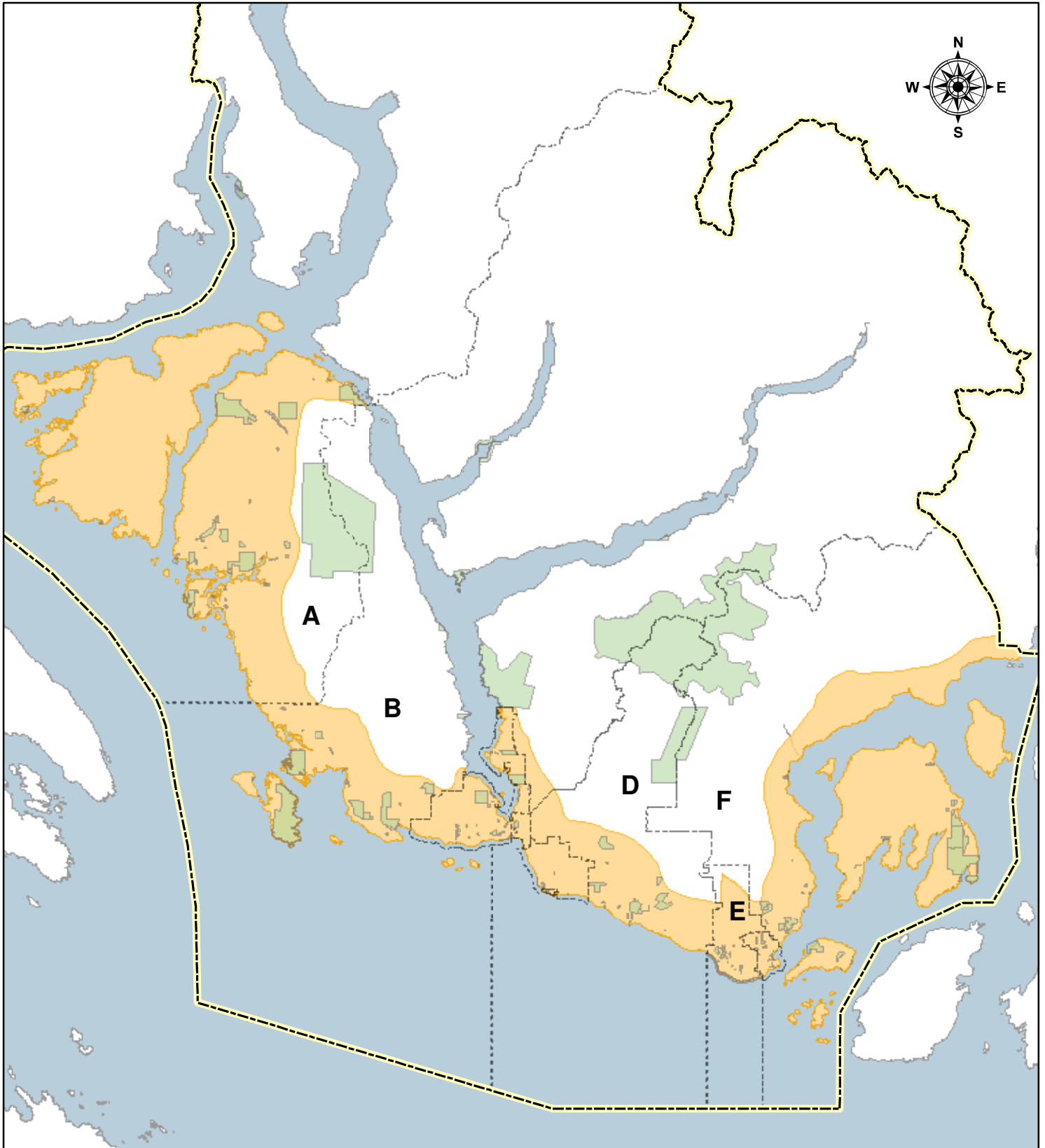
**BC Timber Sales**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Don Hudson, Timber Sales Manager**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

# Sunshine Coast Regional District Proposed Community Interface Areas

APPENDIX A



Sunshine Coast  
Regional District

June, 2013



SCRD Boundary



Electoral Areas



Parks

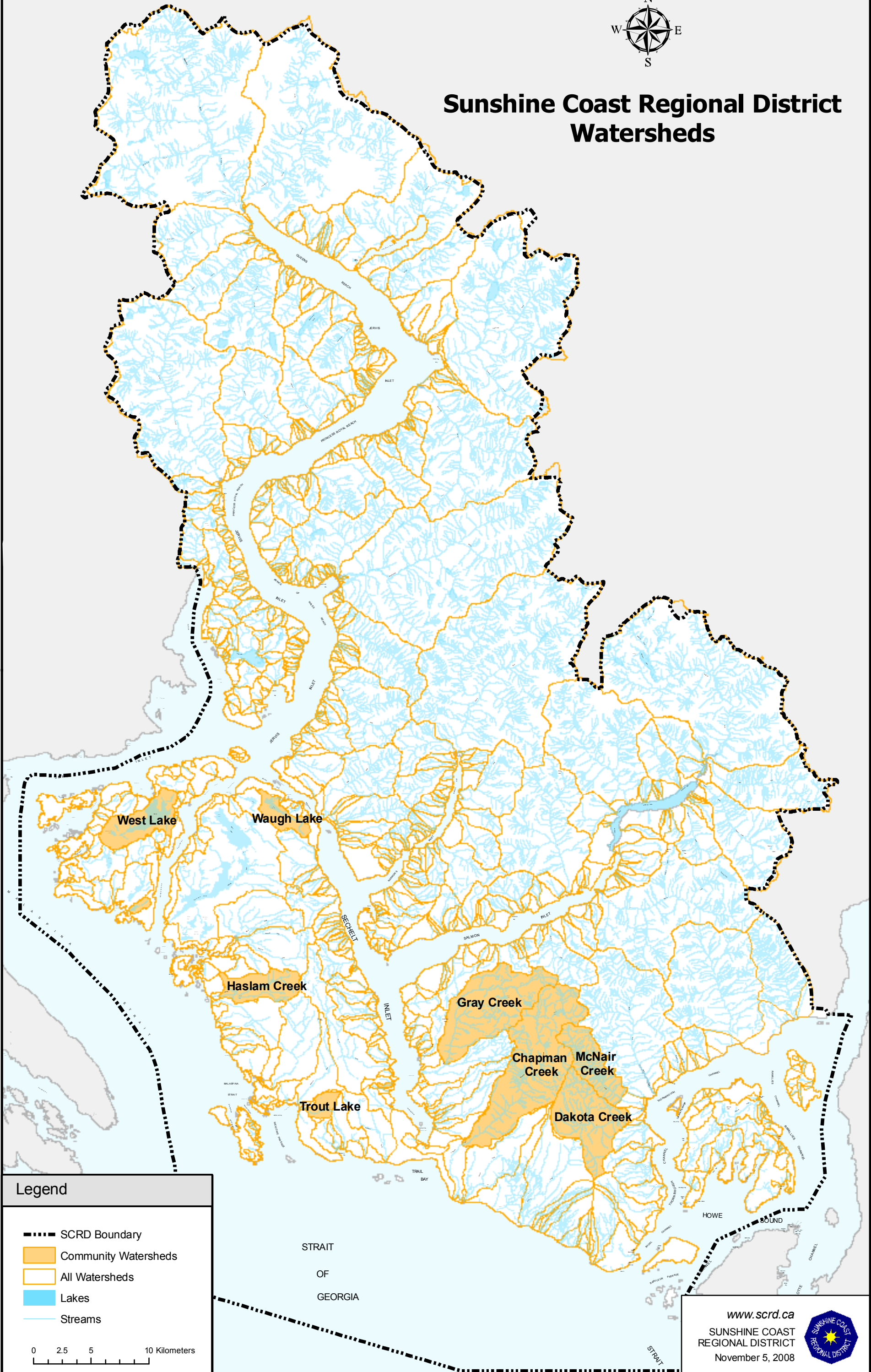


Community Interface Area





# Sunshine Coast Regional District Watersheds

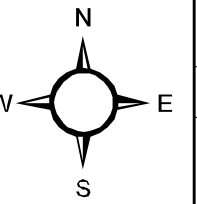






**BCTS**  
BC Timber Sales  
Strait of Georgia

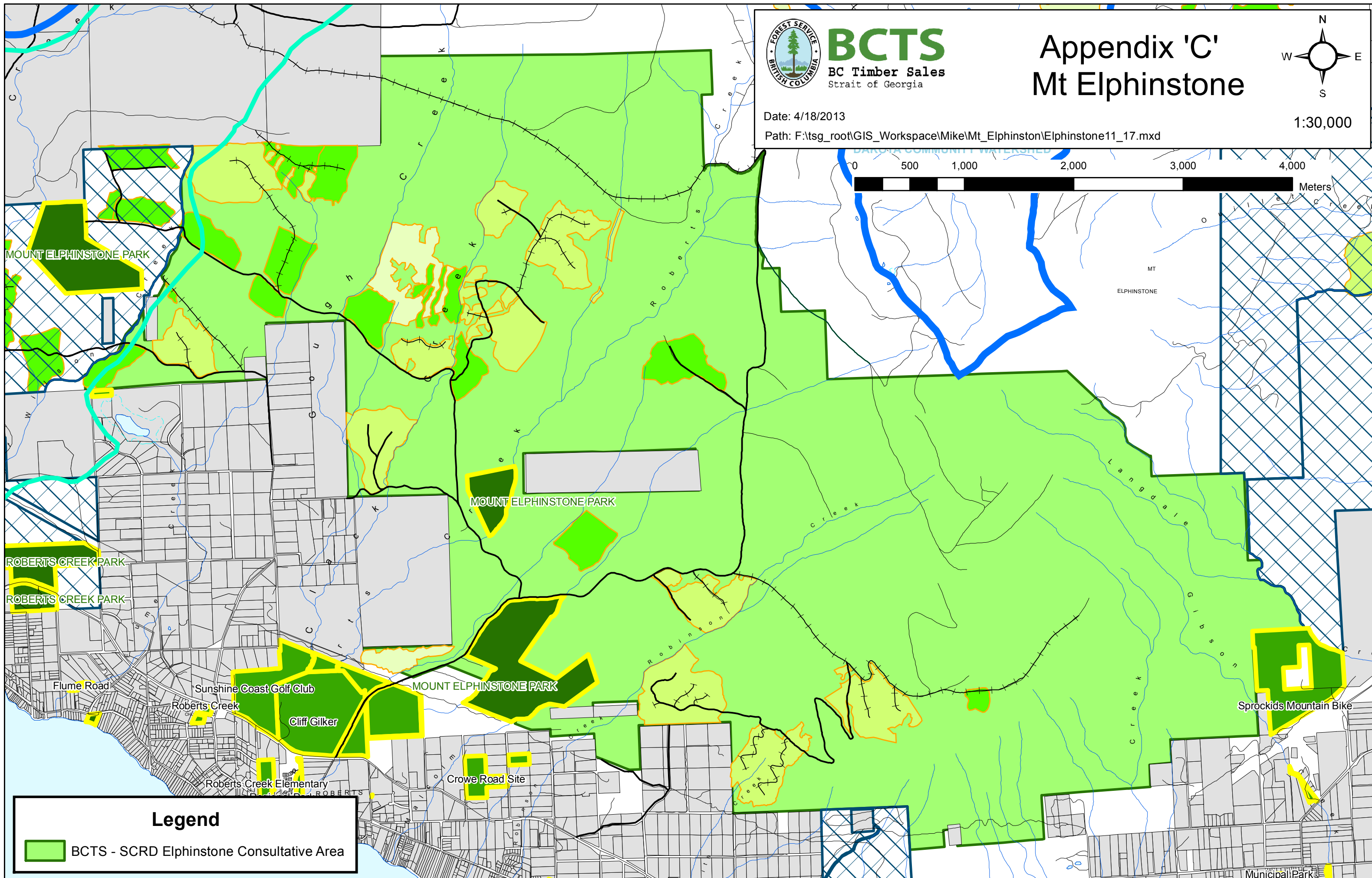
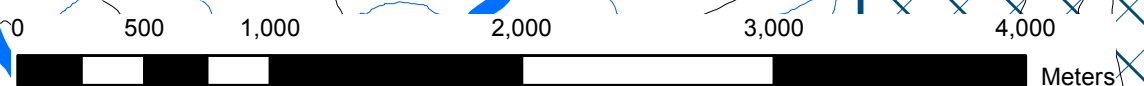
# Appendix 'C' Mt Elphinstone



Date: 4/18/2013

Path: F:\tsg\_root\GIS\_Workspace\Mike\Mt\_Elphinston\Elphinstone11\_17.mxd

1:30,000



## Legend

 BCTS - SCRD Elphinstone Consultative Area



Reference: 244639/244719

March 29, 2019

**VIA EMAIL: [Lori.Pratt@scrd.ca](mailto:Lori.Pratt@scrd.ca); [janette.loveys@scrd.ca](mailto:janette.loveys@scrd.ca)**

Chair Lori Pratt  
Sunshine Coast Regional District

Janette Loveys, Chief Administrative Officer  
Sunshine Coast Regional District

Dear Chair Pratt and Janette Loveys:

Thank you for your letters outlining resolutions from the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) to halt Timber Sale Licences A93884 (Clack Creek) and A91376 (Reed Road) located in the Mount Elphinstone area. This response is also follow up to work that ministry staff are undertaking in order to consider options to develop a plan for the Mount Elphinstone area, which is being explored through the jointly led modernized land use planning (MLUP) process with the shíshálh Nation.

I understand that the South Coast Regional Executive Director provided a general update regarding the status of MLUP on December 21, 2018. It was noted that during the MLUP process, resource management and use, including forest development, is expected to continue under existing land use and management requirements. Having said that, I also acknowledge the concerns that opportunities afforded under MLUP may be impacted with continued land base activities, as well as the need to balance rights and investments undertaken in good faith by existing licensees, permit holders, and other land and resource stakeholders.

The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy have considered how connectivity and management of other associated forest values could be enhanced in areas near the three Mount Elphinstone Park parcels. I am advised that connectivity of the two southern park parcels is the area will likely benefit the most from further review and assessment during an MLUP process. The areas around the existing parcels that are most suitable to enhance connectivity do not have any forest harvesting planned for the next 3 to 4 years, which will enable further unimpeded assessments and discussion.


The Clack Creek Timber Sale Licence (TSL) is approximately 24 hectares of harvest area made up of both research-oriented harvesting trials and a cutblock separated by a variety of wildlife tree retention patches that support riparian area integrity and rare plant community site level representation. A map has been attached for your reference. I also understand that BC Timber Sales (BCTS) is voluntarily managing harvest levels at 50 percent of the allowed rate of harvest for the Mount Elphinstone area, which will further improve the amount of old and mature forest in the area.

In considering the balance of interests, investments made, and potential impacts on future MLUP discussions, the Province of British Columbia considers the combination of voluntary management actions by BCTS and regulatory requirements to manage current values during the expected term of MLUP discussions sufficient. The Clack Creek TSL will be advertised in the coming weeks. For more details on forest management in the Mount Elphinstone area, please contact Stacey Gould, Chinook Timber Sales Manager, by phone at 604 702-5796 or by email at [Stacey.Gould@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Stacey.Gould@gov.bc.ca).

Regarding the Reed Road TSL, I understand that the area is desirable for future public use and that there are concerns about the contribution of the area to ecological integrity, visual quality, surface and ground water management, and fire management. I am further advised that the SCRDC and BCTS have committed to further meetings to follow up on these concerns. While it is uncertain whether the MLUP will influence management of this area, BCTS will continue to work with the SCRDC to address these values to the extent possible. BCTS will hold off on advertising this sale until these discussions have occurred in a meaningful way and a balanced management approach has been developed for the area. In the meantime, BCTS will shift development to other timber sale licences that are largely outside the current proposed park expansion area for Mount Elphinstone.

I again acknowledge the concerns expressed by the SCRDC and the many interests in the Mount Elphinstone area. As we seek a balanced way forward, I ask that you continue to work closely with ministry staff and appropriate First Nations communities to enhance management strategies as afforded under current and future land and resource management approaches.

Sincerely,



Doug Donaldson  
Minister

Attachment

pc: Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy  
Nicholas Simons, MLA, Powell River – Sunshine Coast  
Allan Johnsrude, Regional Executive Director, South Coast Natural Resource Region  
Stacey Gould, Chinook Timber Sales Manager, BC Timber Sales  
Tonianne Mynen, Land and Resource Section Head, South Coast Natural Resource Region

BCTS New Proposed Cut Blocks 2019-2023

Block ID	Licence	Location	Operating Area	Landscape Unit	Estimated Net Area (Ha)	Cruise Volume (m3)	Block State	In Previous OP?	Referral Date	Anticipated Harvest Year
EGG9	TA0333	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	4.4	1,966	Development Ongoing	No	—	2019
EGG23	TA0333	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	18.7	8,294	Development Ongoing	No	—	2019
EGG8	TA0333	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	3.6	1,592	Development Ongoing	No	—	2019
EGG7	TA0333	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	5.5	2,437	Development Ongoing	No	—	2019
EGG4	TA0333	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	2.2	987	Development Ongoing	No	—	2019
EGG2	TA0333	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	8.1	3,589	Development Ongoing	No	—	2019
EGG3	TA0333	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	2.4	1,081	Development Ongoing	No	—	2019
EGG6	TA0333	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	6.0	2,664	Development Ongoing	No	—	2019
EGG5	TA0333	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	5.0	2,228	Development Ongoing	No	—	2019
EGG1	TA0333	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	10.0	4,452	Development Ongoing	No	—	2019
EGG14	TA0334	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	1.4	640	Development Ongoing	No	—	2020
EGG16	TA0334	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	8.9	3,958	Development Ongoing	No	—	2020
EGG22	TA0334	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	13.1	5,835	Development Ongoing	No	—	2020
EGG13	TA0334	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	3.0	1,343	Development Ongoing	No	—	2020
EGG15	TA0334	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	3.0	1,316	Development Ongoing	No	—	2020
EGG18	TA0334	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	16.2	7,213	Development Ongoing	No	—	2020
EGG17	TA0334	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	5.8	2,584	Development Ongoing	No	—	2020
EGG21	TA0335	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	6.4	2,855	Development Ongoing	No	—	2021
EGG20	TA0335	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	10.2	4,536	Development Ongoing	No	—	2021
EGG24	TA0335	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	4.4	1,943	Development Ongoing	No	—	2021
EGG11	TA0335	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	9.8	4,371	Development Ongoing	No	—	2021
EGG12	TA0335	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	4.9	2,161	Development Ongoing	No	—	2021
EGG19	TA0335	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	11.2	4,998	Development Ongoing	No	—	2021
EGG10	TA0335	Egmont	North Lake	SECH	4.4	1,957	Development Ongoing	No	—	2021
G053C39R	TA0045	McNab	McNab/Potlatch	HOWE	28.6	14,000	Proposed	No	—	2022
G053B4DP	TA0045	McNab	McNab/Potlatch	HOWE	21.9	12,000	Proposed	No	—	2022
G081B4QW	TA0525	Granville Bay	Granville	BRITT	14.2	6,000	Proposed	No	—	2023
G081B4QY	TA0525	Granville Bay	Granville	BRITT	9.6	5,000	Proposed	No	—	2023
G081B4TP	TA0525	Granville Bay	Granville	BRITT	24.8	9,000	Proposed	No	—	2023
G053C39S	TA0045	McNab	McNab/Potlatch	HOWE	12.8	6,500	Proposed	No	—	2023
J012B4TZ	TA0540	Mt. Pearkes, Deserted	Mt Pearkes	DESE	44.2	10,000	Proposed	No	—	2023
G053B4S1	TA0528	Rainy River	McNair/Rainy	HOWE	36.4	17,500	Proposed	No	—	2023
G053B4S3	TA0528	Rainy River	McNair/Rainy	HOWE	22.1	10,500	Proposed	No	—	2023
G053B4S9	TA0528	Rainy River	McNair/Rainy	HOWE	4.9	2,300	Proposed	No	—	2023
G053C4J8	TA0528	Rainy River	McNair/Rainy	HOWE	not yet estimated		Proposed	NO	—	2023
G051B4DG	TA0545	Homesite Creek	Sechelt South	SEWELL	36.3	14,000	Proposed	No	—	2023
TOTAL					424.5					



BCTS Previously Referred Cut Blocks 2019-2023

Block ID	Licence	Location	Operating Area	Landscape Unit	Estimated Net Area (Ha)	Cruise Volume (m3)	Block State	In Previous OP?	Referral Date	Anticipated Harvest Year
G053C42W_R	A95814	McNair	McNair/Rainy	HOWE	1.5	1,069	Engineering Complete	Yes	11/23/2018	2019
F070B4DH	TA0020	Bargain Bay	Sechelt North	SECH	13.8	7,107	Development Ongoing	Yes	11/23/2018	2019
G061B4NJ	TA0020	Bargain Bay	Sechelt North	SECH	18.9	12,096	Proposed	Yes	_	2019
G053C42V	A92904	McNair Creek	McNair/Rainy	HOWE	20.9	20,145	Engineering Complete	Yes	8/31/2015	2020
G053C42X	A92904	McNair Creek	McNair/Rainy	HOWE	24.0	20,649	Engineering Complete	Yes	8/31/2015	2020
G053C42W	A92904	McNair Creek	McNair/Rainy	HOWE	34.1	27,785	Engineering Complete	Yes	8/31/2015	2020
G042C4F8	TA0021	Elphinstone	Elphinstone	CHAP	30	23,724	Development Ongoing	Yes	9/22/2016	2020
G043DK042	A87126	Dakota Ridge	Elphinstone	HOWE	5.9	4,934	Engineering Complete	Yes	5/1/2007	2020
G043DK043	A87126	Dakota Ridge	Elphinstone	HOWE	5	1,945	Engineering Complete	Yes	2/8/2007	2020
G043DK044	A87126	Dakota Ridge	Elphinstone	HOWE	35.8	16,776	Engineering Complete	Yes	2/8/2007	2020
G043DK044	A87126	Dakota Ridge	Elphinstone	HOWE	3	2,082	Engineering Complete	Yes	1/1/2010	2020
J011B4D4	TA0023	Crabapple	Brittain East	BRITT	22.1	6,400	Development Ongoing	Yes	2018	2021
J011B46H	TA0023	Crabapple	Brittain East	BRITT	58.4	20,000	Development Ongoing	Yes	2018	2021
K010B46Q	TA0035	Brittain River	Brittain West	BRITT	64.4	23,718	Development Ongoing	Yes	12/15/2017	2021
K010B46R	TA0035	Brittain River	Brittain West	BRITT	31.1	10,954	Development Ongoing	Yes	12/15/2017	2021
K010B46T	TA0035	Brittain River	Brittain West	BRITT	17.9	25,044	Development Ongoing	Yes	12/15/2017	2021
K010B46S	TA0035	Brittain River	Brittain West	BRITT	10.5	4,083	Development Ongoing	Yes	12/15/2017	2021
K010B46P	TA0035	Brittain River	Brittain West	BRITT	12.2	11,868	Development Ongoing	Yes	12/15/2017	2021
F090B4DW	TA0037	Granville Bay	Granville	BRITT	3.5	1,720	Development Ongoing	Yes	11/13/2018	2021
G081B4DU	TA0037	Granville Bay	Granville	BRITT	10.4	20,943	Development Ongoing	Yes	11/13/2018	2021
G081B4DV	TA0037	Granville Bay	Granville	BRITT	16.8	14,483	Development Ongoing	Yes	11/13/2018	2021
J012C3FN	TA0038	Mt. Pearkes, Deserted	Mt Pearkes	DESE	15.5	29,009	Development Ongoing	Yes	9/22/2016	2021
G043BC3ZP	A94817	Elphinstone	Elphinstone	CHAP	32.4	7,000	Development Ongoing	Yes	9/22/2016	2021
F090B4D7	TA0047	Syren Point Hotham Sound	Granville	BRITT	9.3	4,000	Proposed	Yes	11/13/2018	2022
F090B4D8	TA0047	Syren Point Hotham Sound	Granville	BRITT	50.7	25,000	Proposed	Yes	11/13/2018	2022
G053B4DQ	TA0045	McNab	McNab/Potlatch	HOWE	21.8	8,500	Proposed	Yes	2018	2022
G053C4J7	TA0049	Rainy River	McNair/Rainy	HOWE	27.4	14,000	Development Ongoing	Yes	9/21/2017	2022
G053C4J6	TA0049	Rainy River	McNair/Rainy	HOWE	16.0	9,000	Development Ongoing	Yes	9/21/2017	2022
G043C3ZH	TA0048	Elphinstone	Elphinstone	CHAP	10.8	6,000	Proposed	Yes	11/23/2018	2022
J012C3FP	TA0540	Mt. Pearkes, Deserted	Mt Pearkes	DESE	11.8	8,735	Development Ongoing	Yes	9/22/2016	2023
TOTAL					635.9					

## SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT STAFF REPORT

---

**TO:** Planning and Community Development Committee – June 14, 2018

**AUTHOR:** Julie Clark, Planner

**SUBJECT:** **ADVISORY COMMITTEES' COMMENTS ON BCTS 2018-2022 OPERATION PLANS**

---

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**THAT the report titled Advisory Committees' Comments on BCTS 2018-2022 Operation Plans be received;**

**AND THAT Advisory Committee comments be forwarded to BCTS as supplemental information to SCRD Board Resolution 167/18 in response to the BCTS 2018-2022 Operations Plan referral;**

**AND FURTHER THAT this Recommendation be forwarded to the June 14, 2018 Regular Board meeting.**

---

### BACKGROUND

The SCRD Board adopted resolution 167/18, Recommendation No. 4 at its meeting on May 24, 2018 as follows:

#### **Recommendation No. 4**     *BC Timber Sales Operations 2018-2022*

The Planning and Community Development Committee recommended that the report titled BC Timber Sales Operations 2018-2022 be received;

AND THAT the SCRD respond to the BCTS referral with the following comments:

1. The SCRD does not support logging license A91376 located on District Lot 1313, which should be reserved for environmental protection as per ongoing discussions with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development and the Sk̓w̓x̓w̓7mesh Nation;
2. A strategy for the protection and/or restoration of trails surrounding cut blocks G041C4F6 (West Sechelt), G042C4F8 (Mt. Elphinstone), G043C3ZJ (Mt. Elphinstone), Licence A93884 (Mt. Elphinstone) G043C3ZH and G043C3ZP should be confirmed with local trail groups;
3. Public safety measures should be implemented to communicate forestry activity to recreational users, including signage posted on all recreational trails leading to cut blocks, specifically G041C4F6 (West Sechelt), G042C4F8 (Mt. Elphinstone), G043C3ZJ (Mt. Elphinstone), Licence A93884 (Mt. Elphinstone) and G043C3ZH and G043C3ZP;

4. In support of monitoring and protection for marine life near logging activity, SCRD recommends that BCTS commission eelgrass mapping in coastal and tributary areas near proposed logging activity in Jervis Inlet - Hotham Sound, Deserter Creek, Brittain River, as well as coastal and tributary areas of Howe Sound near proposed logging activity - Rainy River, McNair, McNab and Potlatch Creeks, and that the mapping data be shared with the SCRD;

5. Ensure that both shíshálh Nation and Skw\_xwú7mesh Nation are consulted and that all harvesting-related activities undertaken comply with the *Heritage Conservation Act*;

6. With regard to Block A93884, that absent further Provincial Land Use Level consultation on the Sunshine Coast, and as per Board Resolutions 151/17 Recommendation #2 (April 27, 2017), and Board Resolution 255/16 Recommendation #1 (June 23, 2016), the SCRD does not support logging within the 1500 hectare area identified in the Roberts Creek Official Community Plan Map No. 2 as an area for ecological and recreational protection;

AND THAT SCRD staff continue to work with BCTS staff to build on the engagement opportunities presented in the 2018 Advisory Planning Committee (APC) workshop series;

AND FURTHER THAT SCRD's position on logging in Community (drinking) Watersheds be conveyed to the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development to request that a clear limit of zero risk to drinking water quality and quantity be established including:

1. a. Define a drinking water protection strategy for proposed forestry operations that has the goal of achieving zero turbidity, zero sediment and zero pathogen input to nearby creeks or streams from forestry activities;
- b. Establish a monitoring and data sharing program

AND THAT the drinking water protection strategy and monitoring program be extended to areas with multiple groundwater licences including Mount Elphinstone;

2. The forest in the Coastal Douglas Fir Biogeoclimatic Zone be removed from the Timber Harvesting Land Base.

## **DISCUSSION**

SCRD referred the BCTS Operations Plan 2018-2022 to all five Advisory Planning Commissions (West Howe Sound, Elphinstone, Roberts Creek, Halfmoon Bay and Egmont/Pender Harbour), the Natural Resources Advisory Committee and the Roberts Creek Official Community Plan Committee. Committees reviewed the referral on their April and May agendas. The minutes from each meeting that pertain to BCTS are compiled in Attachment A.

BC Timber Sales referred the Operations Plan directly to Sunshine Coast Trails Society (SCTS). Referral comments made by SCTS were submitted directly to BCTS.

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of comments received by the SCRD from Advisory Committees regarding BCTS 2018-2022 Operations Plan. SCRD will forward advisory committees' comments to BCTS as supplemental information to SCRD referral comments included in resolution 167/18 from May 24, 2018.

### *Analysis*

Advisory Committees' comments focused on protecting environmental values such as biodiversity, water quality and quantity, protecting recreational values, best management practices for logging in community watersheds and increased need for provincial level planning and evaluation of cumulative effects of industrial activity on the Sunshine Coast.

The Advisory Committees expressed appreciation for BCTS's recent series of three education and awareness-raising sessions. Advisory members recommend expanding these efforts to further assist dialogue and future planning efforts regarding BCTS forestry activity.

Comments relating to BCTS 2018-2022 Operations Plan have been extracted from the minutes of each Advisory Committee (April and May 2018) and compiled in Attachment A.

### *Organization and Intergovernmental Implications*

The SCRD and BCTS Communication Protocol ensures that BCTS provides timely information about its operational plans and that the SCRD can provide comments.

### *Timeline for next steps or estimated completion date*

As per the Communication Protocol, the SCRD has 90 days to comment on BCTS Operations Plans, which provides a deadline of June 5, 2018 to comment on the referral. SCRD Board comments will be sent in advance of the deadline and advisory comments will be sent as soon as possible after the deadline.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN AND RELATED POLICIES**

*Strategic Plan Values: Enhance Collaboration, Embed Environmental Leadership and Support Sustainable Economic Development*

Forestry is part of the SCRD's strategic priority to support sustainable economic development. The SCRD provides comments and feedback to BCTS on its proposed timber harvesting plans.

## **CONCLUSION**

All five Advisory Planning Commissions, the Natural Resources Advisory Committee and the Roberts Creek Official Community Plan Committee reviewed the 2018-2022 BCTS Operations referral in late April and May.

Advisory committees provide a range of comments focused on comments focused on protecting environmental values such as biodiversity, water quality and quantity, protecting recreational values, best management practices for logging in community watersheds and increased need for provincial level planning and evaluation of cumulative effects of industrial activity on the Sunshine Coast.

Advisory committees' comments will be sent to BCTS following SCRD Board consideration.

**Attachment:**

Attachment A: Advisory Comments on BCTS 2018-2022 Operations Plan

Reviewed by:			
Manager	X - A. Allen	Finance	
GM	X - I. Hall	Legislative	
CAO	X – J. Loveys	Other	

**Advisory Comments on BCTS 2018-2022 Operations Plan**

**Area B APC April 24, 2018**

The APC discussed the staff report regarding BC Timber Sales Operations 2018-2022 and members gave a brief overview of the three -BCTS meetings they attended as representatives of the APC. The following concerns/points/issues were noted:

- If there are no fish in the creek they can cut right up to the creek; this may be something that needs to be looked at.
- There could be an opportunity for the creation of stream stewardship.
- Would like to clarify that there are no trails around the proposed cut lots in the District of Sechelt? The Trails Society has informed BC Timber Sales that there are no known problems in the West Sechelt cut lot.
- Are strongly pleased with SCRD stance that the forest in the Coastal Douglas Fir biogeoclimatic zone be removed from the Timber Harvesting Land Base.
- Support staff recommendations.
- Regarding APC member comment that increased runoff and turbidity from West Sechelt cut lot would be detrimental to downstream property owners and the creek. Think this is mistaken because there are no houses in the area that would be impacted.

**Recommendation No. 1.**      *BC Timber Sales Operations 2018-2022*

Regarding BC Timber Sales Operations 2018-2022, the APC supports SCRD recommendations.

**Area F APC April 24, 2018**

**BC Timber Sales Operations 2018 - 2022**

The APC discussed the staff report regarding BC Timber Sales Operations 2018 - 2022. There were comments on the recent BC Timber Sales field trip for SCRD advisory committee members, regarded as very informative.

Some comments from discussion included:

- If logging in McNab, BCTS will run into a problem with BURNCO.
- If you want DL1313 as a park, you should apply to the Ministry. If the community wants it, come up with at least the stumpage for one rotation of the timber (estimated around two million dollars). If we want parks, the community should pay for it.... If people don't want the Crown interface logged, then subdivide it and sell it. Someone has to pay the bill. Part of the revenue for the Province is stumpage on timber from Crown lands. How do you balance that?
- BCTS are under their allowable cut, and under pressure. They have to be within 10% of

their cut within the five-year period – otherwise they lose it permanently. There is a lot of pressure for that annual cut...the tough law of meeting that harvest level... to provide stability and uniform work for people.

- If they clear-cut DL 1313, it will be a big scar on the hill.

The following points were made:

- The APC questioned staff recommendation 6 on page 27, that “BCTS should commission eelgrass mapping along coastal areas with logging activity and share the eelgrass data with SCRD”, and advised not to do eelgrass and forage fish mapping except in sites where there is planned activity. The mapping is available from the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans and other sources. Gather together all the data that has been produced on eelgrass before asking one department of government to do the mapping.
- Watershed reserves – Staff recommendation 1 on page 27 should say in “active Community Watersheds”, not including reserves. If it is just a “reserve” for the future, logging – well planned, managed, with sediment control and responsible harvesting – can happen without any impact on the future. Dakota and McNair have totally regenerated from the old path logging. They are now twenty or twenty-five to fifty years old; they are all regenerating.
- The APC appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on future BCTS cut blocks.

#### **Area A APC April 25**

Received BC Timber Sales Operations 2018-2022 and the Area A APC agrees with the SCRD staff comments on page 27.

#### **Recommendation No. 1     *BC Timber Sales Operations 2018-2022***

APC would like to see any referrals re: BC Timber Sales Operations include the previous five years of logging activity in accompanying reports.

## **Area E APC April 25, 2018**

The APC discussed the staff report regarding BC Timber Sales Operations 2018 – 2022.

The following points were made:

- Agreement with staff recommendations regarding SCRD comment on the BCTS referral.
- Strong opposition in Area E to the logging of DL 1313
- BCTS has been notified for several years now that they need to take DL1313 off their list on a permanent basis. As world populations grow, so grow the coast's and Area E's population. People and animals require green space and the Reed Road Forest is a true gem and the only substantial forest in our area. Immediate neighbours of Lot DL1313 are very concerned about erosion and loss of watershed for their wells. They believe that their properties, downslope of this forest, would be at huge risk if the forest cover were logged.
- Logging in an urban interface area is example of poor landscape management.
- Discussion of BCTS operations and research projects and APC members' perspectives on the recent BCTS workshops and field trip for SCRD advisory committee members.
- Lack of a land and resource management plan on the Sunshine Coast.
- The Sunshine Coast has old forests that may not be found anywhere else in the province.
- There would probably be more value to the community over the next thirty years to retain the forest than have a revenue stream from forestry. This needs to be addressed in these plans.
- We are short of land to be conserved, short changed. Would like the same conservancy rate as other areas of the Province.
- There are many and varied different forms of recreation here. Add up all the cash flows that result from keeping something like that, and it adds up.
- They need to take all of these considerations into account. Overall the Province and their planning may not be reflecting what the values of this community are. They may not reflect in our bioregion how we are utilizing the woods. There are different ways we might be utilizing the woods as a community. We are the back yard and playground for the Lower Mainland. We can provide a lot of unique things like the Coastal Douglas Fir zone that isn't available in other parts of the Province. There are things like that, that



need to be taken into consideration when they consider that value, and what is generated for the Province financially and overall. We are providing safe spaces for people to be doing healthy recreation.

- There is a huge appetite for what we have got over here. If you are going to start chopping down a mountain, could it have an impact on real estate values?
- The SCRD's response to this issue is lukewarm. They should say that we need this much public recreation space; the forest is really important and we have to protect that. SCRD should say we see advantages for protecting certain lots, and come forth with stronger arguments. Need to bring everybody together and say long term this is what we will do.
- Right now it is a standoff, not a process.
- Want BCTS to leave the south and east flanks of Mount Elphinstone.
- An excerpt pertaining to DL1313 from the Elphinstone Official Community Plan (Bylaw No. 600) was read aloud from section B-10.3 Community and Regional Park Policies, point 3, advocating that the SCRD acquire DL1313 (Old Gibsons Watershed Reserve), a 48 hectare (120 acre) site *"covered by the largest areas of mature coniferous forest and wetland identified in the Sunshine Coast Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory (2003) within the Elphinstone OCP"*, as a community or regional park *"that protects the surface and ground water resources so that they can continue to be available to the Town of Gibsons and the Regional District for community water and reservoir purposes."*

#### Recommendation No. 1     *BC Timber Sales Operations 2018 – 2022*

The Elphinstone APC recommended agreement with the staff recommendations for SCRD comment on the BC Timber Sales Operations 2018-2022 referral, as noted below, and for the following listed reasons:

1. *In support of protecting drinking water quality, SCRD does not support logging in Community Watersheds.*
  - It makes sense. Water is life.
  - Water is essential and becoming more and more important as the climate shifts.
  - We have to make sure all of our community watersheds are protected as we move forward.
2. *SCRD does not support logging license A91376 located on DL1313, which should be reserved for environmental protection as per ongoing discussions with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and the Skwx̓wú7mesh Nation.*
  - Because it is the urban interface.

- We have no accessible forest like this in Elphinstone. Protect public areas like this that the public can enjoy.
  - We emphasize that the SCRD should make every effort to conserve DL1313.
  - It used to be a watershed reserve because there are a lot of residents on wells below it.
  - For property protection – if there is damage from erosion, it ends up costing us all in taxes. Watershed protection ensures that we don't have damages through flooding, erosion and other occurrences because of unstable infrastructure or wells damaged from overland flooding.
  - Streams on the east side of that land are feeding into Chaster Creek.
3. *A strategy for the protection and/or restoration of trails surrounding cut blocks G041C4F6 (West Sechelt), G042C4F8 (Mt. Elphinstone), G043C3ZJ (Mt. Elphinstone), Licence A93884 (Mt. Elphinstone) G043C3ZH and G043C3ZP should be confirmed with local trail groups.*
- Tourism and recreation has always been one of the largest income streams for the Sunshine Coast. If more people are coming here to enjoy these trails, it is to the benefit of the community that these trails are maintained and protected.
  - A lot of these trails are accessible because BCTS maintains the roads (paid for by logging).
4. *Public safety measures be implemented to communicate forestry activity to recreational users, including signage posted on all recreational trails leading to cut blocks, specifically G041C4F6 (West Sechelt), G042C4F8 (Mt. Elphinstone), G043C3ZJ (Mt. Elphinstone), Licence A93884 (Mt. Elphinstone) and G043C3ZH and G043C3ZP.*
- Public safety needs to be an important component because these are public lands. The public needs to have safe access.
5. *Ensure that both shíshálh Nation and Skwx̱ wú7mesh Nation are consulted and that all harvesting related activities undertaken comply with the Heritage Conservation Act.*
- It is important that we respect that we are on unceded territory.
6. *BCTS should commission eelgrass mapping along coastal areas with logging activity and share the eelgrass data with SCRD.*
- The only way we will know logging is impacting the eelgrass is if it is known that the eelgrass is there; since BCTS are the ones who want to log, BCTS should be the ones to provide that information.
7. *The forest in the Coastal Douglas Fir biogeoclimatic zone be removed from the Timber Harvesting Land Base.*
- This is unique forest that we need to preserve.

## Recommendation No. 2

## *Sunshine Coast Land and Resource Management Plan*

The Elphinstone APC recommended that the Sunshine Coast Regional District seek to have a Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), or similar current legislative process, so that the Sunshine Coast can have this Plan going forward; and so that there is potentially less conflict

regarding land use if we are clear on which areas we would like to save, and we get a say; and that the SCR D go through this process if possible.

### Recommendation No. 3

### *BC Timber Sales Public Awareness Activities*

The Elphinstone APC recommended that the BCTS continue to dialogue and create opportunities to educate people about their research and their operating practices so the general public can gain a greater understanding of the logging process on the Sunshine Coast.

### **Roberts Creek Official Community Plan Committee, May 8, 2018**

BC Timber Sales Referral – The OCPC fully supports all items in this referral. We would like to see a Strategy for Protection/Restoration be put into place. We would like to see free and informed prior consent obtained.

### **Area D APC May 14, 2018**

- APC supports the SCR D recommendations noted on page 1 of the report.
- It should be added that watershed protection should include water source protection for the large number of residents who are not served by the SCR D-managed water supply but are dependent on surface and well water. There is a large area above the Roberts Creek community being logged by multiple companies that will have an effect on surface and ground water.
- More needs to be done at the Provincial level with all stakeholders regarding a coordinated plan for water source protection and for coastal land use management.
- Logging in private managed forests needs to be brought under a standard set of logging conditions.
- At lower elevations we are under-represented for parks and recreational forests.
- District Lot 1313 should be left as a green mature forest. It is easily accessible by a large number of people and has great value for tourism and recreation.
- We recognize that logging is an integral part of our history and provincial prosperity, but there is a need for better integration with our growing community. Times are changing, our population is growing, we have a thriving ecotourism draw, and tree harvesting targets need to be adjusted in accordance with our current reality.
- We appreciate that BCTS has reached out to the community in the recent meeting with APC members, to educate and listen to community concerns. We look forward to further positive interactions and would encourage a larger consultation with a greater number of APC members in the future.

**NRAC May 16, 2018**

Recommendation No. 1      *BC Timber Sales Operations 2018-2022*

The Natural Resource Advisory Committee accepts the SCR D staff's recommendations to go forward as amended;

AND THAT the Natural Resource Advisory Committee recognizes that NRAC needs further time to review the BCTS report. Further recommendations may be added next meeting;

AND THAT the Natural Resource Advisory Committee recommends that BCTS include an appropriately designed buffer for the wind farm around in the Coastal Douglas Fir biogeoclimatic zone.

Recommendation No. 2      *BC Timber Sales Operations 2018-2022*

The Natural Resource Advisory Committee recommended that the SCR D staff invite BCTS to attend the NRAC June 20, 2018 meeting.

## SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT STAFF REPORT

---

**TO:** Planning and Community Development Committee – May 10, 2018

**AUTHOR:** Julie Clark, Planner

**SUBJECT:** BC TIMBER SALES OPERATIONS 2018-2022

---

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**THAT** the report titled BC Timber Sales Operations 2018-2022 be received;

**AND THAT** the SCRD respond to the BCTS referral with the following comments:

1. The SCRD does not support logging license A91376 located on District Lot 1313, which should be reserved for environmental protection as per ongoing discussions with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development and the Skwxwú7mesh Nation;
2. A strategy for the protection and/or restoration of trails surrounding cut blocks G041C4F6 (West Sechelt), G042C4F8 (Mt. Elphinstone), G043C3ZJ (Mt. Elphinstone), Licence A93884 (Mt. Elphinstone) G043C3ZH and G043C3ZP should be confirmed with local trail groups;
3. Public safety measures be implemented to communicate forestry activity to recreational users, including signage posted on all recreational trails leading to cut blocks, specifically G041C4F6 (West Sechelt), G042C4F8 (Mt. Elphinstone), G043C3ZJ (Mt. Elphinstone), Licence A93884 (Mt. Elphinstone) and G043C3ZH and G043C3ZP;
4. In support of monitoring and protection for marine life near logging activity, SCRD recommends that BCTS commission eelgrass mapping in coastal and tributary areas near proposed logging activity in Jervis Inlet - Hotham Sound, Deserted Creek, Brittain River, as well as coastal and tributary areas of Howe Sound near proposed logging activity - Rainy River, McNair, McNab and Potlatch Creeks, and that the mapping data be shared with the SCRD;
5. Ensure that both *shíshálh* Nation and Skwxwú7mesh Nation are consulted and that all harvesting-related activities undertaken comply with the *Heritage Conservation Act*;

**AND FURTHER THAT** SCRD's position on logging in Community (drinking) Watersheds be conveyed to the Ministry of Forests Lands Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development to request that a clear limit of zero risk to drinking water quality and quantity be established including:

6.
  - a. Define a drinking water protection strategy for proposed forestry operations that has the goal of achieving zero turbidity, zero sediment and zero pathogen input to nearby creeks or streams from forestry activities;
  - b. Establish a monitoring and data sharing program
7. The forest in the Coastal Douglas Fir Biogeoclimatic Zone be removed from the Timber Harvesting Land Base.

---

## BACKGROUND

On March 7, 2018, the SCRD received a referral from BC Timber Sales (BCTS), Sunshine Coast Natural Resource District regarding 2018-2022 Operational Plan Information Sharing.

Each year SCRD receives a 5-year operating plan from BC Timber Sales (BCTS) as a referral for comment. BCTS shares proposed harvesting and road building activities in order to understand stakeholder interests in advance of anticipated harvesting. Operational plans are guided by the Chinook Region's Forest Stewardship Plan, which is updated on a 5-year cycle. The current Forest Stewardship Plan was recently updated and provides direction for 2018-2022.

In response to the operational plan referral, SCRD submits comments in consideration of local land use planning, environmental leadership, community interface concerns and other community interests. SCRD relies on data and feedback from a variety of sources to prepare comments, such as: Official Community Plans, Advisory Planning Commissions, Natural Resources Advisory Committee, Sunshine Coast Trails Society, species mapping, heritage protection, and trails.

BCTS is a Provincial Corporation who is responsible for harvesting approximately 20% of British Columbia's Annual Allowable Cut and operates under the legislative and regulatory frameworks of the *Forest Act*, the *Forest Range and Practices Act*, the *Wildfire Act*, *BCTS Regulation* and the *Wildfire Regulation*.

BCTS has a mandate to provide credible representative price and cost benchmarks through auctions of timber harvested from public land in British Columbia using sound forest management practices.

BCTS has a mandate to harvest 313,027m<sup>3</sup> of timber annually in the Sunshine Coast Natural Resource District, which includes the area of the SCRD and Powell River Regional District. To achieve its mandate, BCTS attempts to distribute the cut blocks across the Sunshine Coast, rather than harvesting 313,027 m<sup>3</sup> in one area at one time. This includes harvesting timber in Community (drinking) Watersheds. The harvest level is averaged over a five-year period and if not met each year, the level accumulates each successive year until it is met.

In January 2000 the Board adopted resolution 27/00, Recommendation No. 13 which declared that the SCRD is not in favour of logging in designated community watersheds or watershed reserves. Since then, staff have endeavoured to review resource referrals with this resolution as a guiding principle. This long-standing position has been held for the purpose of protecting water quality to drinking water standards.

In March 2011 the Board adopted resolution 147/11, Recommendation No. 9 which stated (in part) that the SCRD does not support logging in the Dakota Community Watershed.

In 2016 and 2017 the SCRD adopted resolutions which maintained the SCRDs position that it does not support logging in the community watersheds or watershed reserves for the purpose of protecting water used for drinking. In response to the 2017-2021 BCTS Operations Plan, the SCRD refined its position regarding logging in Community (drinking) Watersheds. In support of protecting drinking water, a clear limit of zero risk to drinking water quality be established to protect from impacts of sediment, turbidity and pathogens.

Forestry activity can result in risks to water quality. Activities, such as road construction and harvesting have the potential to affect runoff patterns and stream flow as well as increase the risk of erosion, landslides and mass wasting, thus increasing sediment loading in the stream system and increasing turbidity levels in receiving waters.

SCRD position on forestry activity in Community (drinking) Watersheds is that zero risk to drinking water quality associated with sediment, turbidity or pathogens is acceptable.

#### *2018 Referral*

The purpose of this report is to obtain SCRD Board direction on the following:

- 2018-2022 BCTS Operations Plan referral comments
- That the SCRD's position on logging in Community (drinking) Watersheds be conveyed to Ministry of Forests Lands Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) to request that a clear limit of zero risk to drinking water quality be established.

#### **DISCUSSION**

A summary of previously referred cut blocks is provided below. Comments are provided regarding newly referred cut blocks added for 2022. Staff prepared two maps that include the proposed cut blocks in the SCRD (Due to file size, these maps are hosted on the website and not included in the agenda package <http://www.scrd.ca/agendas-2018>). BCTS has provided a summary spreadsheet of 2018-2022 Operations Plan (attachment A) and their referral maps can be viewed online at <https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/BCTS/areas/TCH/FSPDSC-IS-2-2017.htm>. Cut blocks and their corresponding BCTS map sheet are referred to throughout this report.

*Previously referred cut blocks:*

- A total of 9 cut blocks remain in community (drinking) watersheds (8 in Dakota Community Watershed, 1 in McNair Community Watershed), scheduled for auction between 2018 and 2021.
- Mt. Elphinstone cut block G043C3ZP located on DL 1313 (Elphinstone map sheet) has been delayed another year to enable the SCRD to continue dialogue with the Skwxwú7mesh Nation and FLNRORD. It is now scheduled for auction in 2019.

In 2016, the Board resolved that the SCRD maintain its position that it does not support logging license A91376 located on District Lot 1313, which should be reserved for environmental protection.

It was noted by BCTS that delaying harvest of DL 1313 increases pressure to harvest timber in other areas within the 1,500 hectare proposed Mt. Elphinstone park identified in the Roberts Creek Official Community Plan (OCP) Map No. 2.

The following table is a summary of previously referred cut blocks that have immediate proximity to existing trails.

<b>Cut block or license</b>	<b>Year to be auctioned</b>	<b>Map Sheet</b>	<b>Trails Affected</b>	<b>Electoral Area</b>
G041C4F6	2018	West Sechelt	Short and Sweet	B
A93884	2018	Elphinstone	Wagonroad Access 1&2, Trailfest Wagon Road, Jones, Davie, Svern's Sortie, Plus Vite, Dale's Connector, Caroline's Connector and Lower Caroline's.	D
G042C4F8	2019	Elphinstone	Hijacked, Amuse Bouche, H'ors D'oeuvre, and Plus Vite.	D
G043C3ZJ	2019	Elphinstone	Pacheko St Trail.	D

Trails provide important opportunities to experience the forest. It is recommended that BCTS continue to work collaboratively with Sunshine Coast Trails Society to inform plans for trail



restoration work and public safety measures resulting from BCTS logging or road building activity.

### *Eelgrass and Forage Fish*

Eelgrass is an important aquatic species for ocean ecosystem health. Eelgrass beds filter water, reduce the effects of coastal pollution and nutrient loading from runoff, buffer coastal areas from extreme weather as well as act as a nursery to forage fish. Eelgrass is important to terrestrial ecosystem health because it functions as an efficient carbon sink. Blue carbon sinks (referring to the ocean plants such as eelgrass) “which cover less than 0.2% of the seafloor, contribute to 50% of the total burial of organic carbon in ocean sediments and therefore rank amongst the most intense carbon sinks in the biosphere.”

The SCRD has access to local eelgrass mapping data has been collected over many years by a consultant on behalf of the Sea Change Marine Conservation Society and the Community Mapping Network. In addition, SCRD has eelgrass data from the Sechelt Indian Government District, Islands Trust and BC Marine Conservation Analysis. Not all areas of the Coast have been mapped.

SCRD reviews a variety of referrals with development applications that could potentially impact coastal environments. Eelgrass mapping data is used in the review process, where data is available, recommendations are made for development that protects eelgrass. Where data is not available, it is recommended that a Qualified Professional is sought to determine if eelgrass is present, and if so, adjust development plans to ensure protection of eelgrass and forage fish.

In the 2018-2022 BCTS Operations Plan substantial logging activity is proposed for the areas of Jarvis Inlet (Hotham Sound, Deserted Creek, Brittain River), Rainy River, McNair, McNab, and Potlatch Creeks. Cut blocks in these areas are near to the ocean or concentrated upstream along major creeks. These cut blocks will increase the cumulative impacts in these creeks and watersheds which have experienced considerable recent BCTS activity and potentially increase impacts in coastal areas.

Available eelgrass mapping data in Jarvis Inlet is outdated (1957-1977). SCRD does not have current eelgrass mapping data for the Hotham Sound, Deserted Creek, Brittain River areas of Jarvis Inlet. To SCRD’s knowledge, no eelgrass mapping has taken place or along the coast of Electoral Area F between Langdale and Potlatch Creek. SCRD recommends that BCTS work with a Qualified Professional to collect eelgrass data in these planned areas of high harvest and road building activity and share the data with the SCRD. If eelgrass were found in nearby estuaries and coastal areas, this baseline data could provide the foundation of a future monitoring program in which healthy eelgrass habitats would be one indicator of successful upstream restoration work.

### *Newly referred cut blocks proposed for auction (2022)*

Eleven cut blocks are proposed for 2022. The majority of these blocks are in remote areas of the SCRD: Hotham Sound, Jarvis Inlet and beyond Port Mellon in the Rainy River, McNab Creek and Potlatch Creek Watersheds.

There are 2 cut blocks proposed for 2022 that are near active trails.

Cut block or license	Year to be auctioned	Map Sheet	Trails Affected	Electoral Area
G043C3ZH	2022	Elphinstone	Highway 103 and West Ridge	D
G043C3ZP	2022	Elphinstone	Guy's Gulch	D

The SCRD recommends that BCTS continue collaborative efforts with Sunshine Coast Trails Society to develop specific trail protection and / or restoration strategies around proposed cut blocks. Public safety measures and signage on trails near cut blocks would also benefit from feedback by Sunshine Coast Trails Society.

#### *2022 Cut blocks in Community (Drinking) Watersheds*

As with previous referrals, cut blocks continue to be proposed within Community (drinking) Watersheds in order for BCTS to meet its mandate to harvest 313,027 m<sup>3</sup> of timber annually within the Sunshine Coast Natural Resource District. Cut block G053B4DC (Elphinstone map sheet, Electoral Area F), in Dakota Community (drinking) Watershed is scheduled for auction in 2022.

In support of drinking water protection, the SCRD is not in support of logging cut block G053B4DC in Dakota Community (drinking) Watershed unless a strategy and monitoring program to ensure zero risk to drinking water is in place.

#### *Provincial Strategic Planning: Forest Management Objectives in Community (drinking) Watersheds*

BCTS has recently updated its Forest Stewardship Plan (Sunshine Coast Natural Resource District) in which it has added a commitment to do hydrologic assessments when planning for logging in Community (drinking) Watersheds (section 4.2.5 Water in Community Watersheds).

A letter from BCTS to SCRD on August 15, 2017 states that this new strategy is “intended to mitigate potentially negative impacts from harvesting and road building at the landscape and stand level, and to set clear limits on risks to both water quality and quantity.” SCRD acknowledges the addition of hydrologic assessments as an important diagnostic and planning tool but recognizes that it does not comprise a complete strategy. In addition, staff raise the following concerns:

- BCTS states that hydrologic assessments will mitigate potential negative impacts, which suggests a level of risk is acceptable. SCRD's position is that zero risk from turbidity, sediment and pathogens is an acceptable result of logging activity in Community (drinking) Watersheds.

- Setting clear limits on risk to both water quality and quantity would require a monitoring and data sharing program

Recent community engagement sessions with BCTS have also emphasized that BCTS is not responsible for this level of strategic planning / setting objectives for forest management through policy and legislation. As such, staff recommend that the SCRD's position on logging in Community (drinking) Watersheds be conveyed to the Ministry of Forests Lands Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development and that clear limits of zero risk to drinking water quality be established including:

- a. Define a drinking water protection strategy for proposed forestry operations that has the goal of achieving zero turbidity, zero sediment and zero pathogen input to nearby creeks or streams from forestry activities;
- b. Implement a monitoring and data sharing program.

To eliminate risk associated with sediment, turbidity and pathogens from future forestry activities in Community (drinking) Watersheds, specific controls must be in place, monitored and reported on.

*Additional water concerns: Surface and ground water*

Surface and ground water impacts of forestry activity are potential concerns of residents who rely on creeks or wells as their drinking water supply.

There are 380 registered addresses above Sunshine Coast Highway in Electoral Areas D and E that are not served by regional water. The drinking water for these properties is accessed by individual wells or surface water from creeks. Provincial data show that there are 120 registered wells, and 113 registered surface water licenses for this area outside the SCRD's water service area. It should be noted that the actual number of existing wells is expected to be higher, as registration is not a requirement. This same area interfaces with a high concentration of recent and upcoming BCTS cut blocks (BCTS Elphinstone map sheet). The residential properties dependent on surface or groundwater are all downstream BCTS cut blocks.

Properties above the highway in Electoral Areas D and E are not the only properties depending on water quality and quantity from creeks and groundwater. Within the SCRD's water service area, which is below Highway 101 in areas D and E, there are 123 wells and 212 surface water licenses that are known.

The table below shows a summary of registered wells and surface water licenses.

	Registered Wells	Surface Water Licences
Outside SCRD water service area in Electoral Area in D and E (Above Highway 101)	120	113
Within SCRD water service area in Electoral Area in D and E (below Highway 101)	123	212
Total	243	325

The slopes of Mount Elphinstone above the highway in Electoral Areas D and E (BCTS Elphinstone Map Sheet) are not considered by BCTS to be within a Community (drinking) Watershed, however many properties depend on water quality and quantity for from creeks or groundwater for drinking water and therefore also need clear limits of zero risk to drinking water resulting from logging activity.

#### *Coastal Douglas Fir Ecosystem*

According to the Coastal Douglas Fir Conservation Partnership, the Coastal Douglas-Fir Biogeoclimatic Zone (CDF) is home to a unique set of associated ecosystems that occurs on a narrow strip of south-east Vancouver Island, Gulf Islands, and the Sunshine Coast. In this region, in the rainshadow of Vancouver Island and the Olympic Mountains, a Mediterranean-like climate exists, and allows for a rich flora and fauna to thrive. The CDF forest is at risk of losing many of the species, relationships, and healthy ecosystems that define it. Confined to a small area on south eastern Vancouver Island and on the Sunshine Coast, the natural ecosystems are competing with human pressures, including development, industrial landscape use, increasing numbers and frequency of invasive species, and increased recreational use.

On the Sunshine Coast, the CDF ecosystems exist primarily between the coastline and the Sunshine Coast Highway in Electoral Area B- from approximately Halfmoon Bay to Wood Bay. Within that area, there is Provincial Land which is considered part of the Timber Harvesting Land Base, which has the potential to logged in the future.

SCRD acknowledges BCTS's commitment to deferring harvesting activity for the foreseeable future in the rare Coastal Douglas Fir ecosystem to ensure conservation priorities are in place (West Sechelt map sheet, Electoral Area B). SCRD supports removing this area from the Timber Harvesting Land Base and recommends communicating this support to FLNRORD.

#### *Organization and Intergovernmental Implications*

The SCRD and BCTS signed a communication protocol on June 2, 2014. The protocol ensures that BCTS provides timely information about its operational plans and that the SCRD can provide comments back. Each successive year builds on previous years' plans as new field survey information is collected and stakeholder information is considered.

Staff will continue to work cooperatively with BCTS to identify future opportunities for community consultation.

*Timeline for next steps or estimated completion date*

As per the Communication Protocol, the SCRD has 90 days to comment, which provides a deadline of June 5, 2018 to comment on the referral.

*Communications Strategy*

BCTS staff noted that it is most helpful to receive comments on cut blocks proposed for auction three to five years in advance in order to address comments during forest engineering and planning phases.

This report will be referred to the Advisory Planning Commissions and the Natural Resources Advisory Committee for comment in April and May. A supplemental report including referral comments may be provided at the June Planning and Community Development Committee.

**STRATEGIC PLAN AND RELATED POLICIES**

*Strategic Plan Values: Enhance Collaboration, Embed Environmental Leadership and Support Sustainable Economic Development*

The SCRD is working cooperatively with FLNRORD and BCTS staff to provide comments and feedback on its proposed timber harvesting plans.

Forestry is part of the SCRD's strategic priority to support sustainable economic development.

**CONCLUSION**

The SCRD received the 2018-2022 Operational Plan referral from BCTS and will respond with comments as per the Communications Protocol by June 5, 2018.

SCRD supports continued collaboration between BCTS and Sunshine Coast Trail Society to ensure trail restoration and public safety measures are implemented for trails impacted by logging activity.

In support of monitoring and protection for marine life near logging activity, SCRD recommends that BCTS commission eelgrass mapping in coastal and tributary areas near logging activity in Jervis Inlet - Hotham Sound, Deserted Creek, Brittain River, as well as coastal and tributary areas of Howe Sound near logging activity - Rainy River, McNair, McNab and Potlatch Creeks.

In support of protecting drinking water quality, SCRD does not support logging in Community (drinking) Watersheds. Further, staff recommend taking the SCRD's refined position on logging in Community (drinking) Watersheds to FLNRORD to request that clear limits of zero risk to drinking water established for logging Community (drinking) Watersheds.

*Attachments*

Attachment A – BCTS Summary Spreadsheet 2018-2022 Operations Plan

The following maps are available on the SCRD Website (<http://www.scrd.ca/agendas-2018>). Due to file size, they are not included in the agenda package.

Map of South SCRD, BCTS 2018-2022 Operations Plan

Map of North SCRD, BCTS 2018-2022 Operations Plan

Reviewed by:			
Manager	X- A.Allen	Finance	
GM	X- I.Hall X- R.Rosenboom	Legislative	
CAO	X- J. Loveys	Other	X- S.Walkey