

Chief Forester Order
Respecting an AAC Determination
For Tree Farm Licence No. 43

Section 8 (3.1) of the *Forest Act* stipulates in part that

If ... the chief forester considers that the allowable annual cut ... is not likely to be changed significantly with a new determination ... the chief forester ... by written order may postpone the next [allowable annual cut] determination ... to a date that is up to 10 years after the date of the relevant last determination, and ... must give written reasons for the postponement".

In considering whether to postpone the next AAC determination for Tree Farm Licence No. 43:

- I have reviewed each of the factors considered in the most recent relevant determination, made on January 31, 2000. That determination set the AAC at 39,900 cubic metres, effective March 1, 2000. Based on the current five-year term, the AAC would be re-determined before January 31, 2005.
- I have reviewed the timber supply analysis accepted in June 1999 in support of that determination. I am aware that the licensee has historically used area-based analysis for each of the three separate blocks within the TFL and that this same approach was used for the most recent analysis.
- In the base case an even-flow harvest level of 108.2 hectares per year was attained.
- The twenty-year plan, which was predicated on the base case harvest level, demonstrates that the area-based harvest level as projected in the analysis can be achieved for the next 20 years, representing at least two-thirds of the anticipated rotation period.
- Estimates used to determine the current volume-based AAC were derived using the volume of stands scheduled for harvest in the first 5-year period of the twenty-year plan.
- An alternative volume-based analysis for the Fraser block indicated that, except for a decline in the second decade, the current AAC can be maintained in the long-term. I note that currently available managed stand volume estimates for cottonwood and hybrid poplar (which may affect the magnitude of the decline in the second decade) are highly uncertain.
- I have considered the significance of the concerns raised by the deputy chief forester in the 2000 AAC Rationale, and the requests made of the licensee at that time. I have also considered what has transpired in reaction to those concerns and requests. In brief:
 - The deputy chief forester requested that the licensee review the economic opportunities to access the inoperable area located between the Jewakwa

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and Heakamie Rivers in the Homathko block. I note that the licensee still considers this area to be economically inoperable. I expect that when an economically feasible method for accessing the timber is developed, the licensee will include the area that is not otherwise excluded from harvesting in the timber harvesting land base used for future analyses.

- The deputy chief forester indicated that minimum harvestable ages and growth and yield information for managed stands need to be improved to provide more reliable estimates of timber supply for this TFL. I am aware that the licensee has established permanent sample plots in the three blocks and has re-measured already existing plots; however no new growth and yield information has yet been derived from these plots. I expect that when reliable growth and yield information can be derived from these plots, it will be used in future timber supply analyses.
- The deputy chief forester requested a schedule that outlines how and when the timber supply within the three blocks will be analyzed using a volume-based analysis. The licensee has indicated that it anticipates conducting such analyses for the Homathco and Kingcome blocks in 2020 and 2030 respectively. Given the status of the currently available growth and yield information, I am satisfied that the area-based approach used in the most recent analysis would still be appropriate if a new analysis were conducted for MP No. 5.
- I note the deputy chief forester's concern regarding the accounting for identified wildlife habitat requirements in the most recent analysis. I am aware that one Wildlife Habitat Area for grizzly bears has been established in the Homathco drainage. As this area is congruent with areas excluded from the timber harvesting land base for other reasons, I am satisfied that no change in the land base contributing to timber supply has occurred on this account.
- I have investigated whether any significant new information exists concerning each factor specified in Section 8 of the *Act*. I am aware that:
 - The information used in the analysis for the last determination reflected, and still reflects, the most current technical information. Were I to make a new determination as scheduled in early 2005, I believe that there would be little change in the science-based elements of the analysis (e.g., site productivity, inventory, growth and yield).
 - The licensee continues to establish and monitor permanent growth and yield sample plots. Without improved information it is difficult to improve upon the estimates of mid- to long-term timber supply.

I remain guided by the economic and social objectives of the Crown as expressed in the

Minister's letter dated July 28, 1994. The Minister said that 'any decreases in allowable cut at this time should be no larger than are necessary to avoid compromising long-run sustainability'. As mentioned above, the most recent area-based timber supply analysis indicated that timber supply is very stable across the full planning horizon. No changes to land base are expected in the near future. Furthermore, the volume-based analysis for the Fraser block suggests that the harvest volume attributable to that block can be sustained until 2010, ten years after the last determination.

After reviewing the factors considered in the last AAC determination, and the currently available information, I have determined that the allowable annual cut of 39,900 cubic metres is not likely to be changed significantly with a new determination made according to the current schedule.

I am aware of the Province's obligation stemming from court decisions to consult First Nations on various forest management matters. I particularly note that a postponement of the next determination will afford all parties more time to verify, and where possible improve, information related to First Nations interests in the area. This will help the licensee speak comprehensively to those interests in the next TFL management plan, which will underlie the next timber supply analysis.

Under authority of Section 8(3.1) of the *Forest Act*, I hereby postpone by five years the next AAC determination for Tree Farm Licence No. 43. The next AAC determination is therefore now scheduled to be made before January 31, 2010, being 10 years after the date of the last AAC determination.

If I conclude that timber supply parameters for the tree farm licence area have changed significantly in the interim, I may rescind this order as authorized by Section 8(3.2) of the *Forest Act*, and set a date for the next AAC determination that is earlier than January 31, 2010.

Ken Baker
Ken Baker
Deputy Chief Forester

May 14, 2003
Date