

Private Land Removal from Tree Farm Licence 23 Communications Plan

Purpose: To communicate Minister's decision on whether to grant PricewaterhouseCoopers request to allow the removal of parcels of private land from Tree Farm Licence 23 in the Kootenays

BACKGROUND:

In June 2007, Pope & Talbot wrote the Ministry of Forests and Range asking for approval to remove parcels of private land from Tree Farm Licence 23. Under the Forest Act, private land in a tree farm licence is managed as Crown land, unless permission is received from the Minister of Forests to have the private land removed from the tree farm licence and managed as private land.

In October 2007, Pope & Talbot entered into receivership, and it is now the receiver, PricewaterhouseCoopers, that is trying to sell the private land. While the original request was to remove 4,542 hectares, the request was amended to 4,341 hectares when it was discovered that one 130-hectare parcel was important mountain caribou habitat.

The ministry consulted with other government agencies, local governments and held public meetings in Revelstoke, Nakusp and Castlegar in developing an information package to for the Minister to consider in making his decision. As required by law, the ministry also consulted with area First Nations.

The Minister can choose to grant the request to remove all private lands, none of the private lands, or only some of the private lands.

In July 2008, the Auditor General released a report criticizing the ministry for the decision-making processes around the approval to remove private land from TFLs 6, 19 and 25.

COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES:

- To communicate Minister's decision to all key stakeholders and the rationale behind it.
- To demonstrate improvements, as per commitments made in response to Auditor General's Report on TFLs 6, 19 and 25, with respect to documentation, consultation and communications.

AUDIENCES:

External:

- Interfor
- Interior Logging Association
- Unions: USW, PPWC, CEP
- Area First Nations
- Local governments
- Local media
- Legislative press gallery
- Public who attended public meetings

Internal:

- Ministry of Forests and Range staff
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts
- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

- Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Phone calls to key stakeholders: after decision is made and Receiver informed, key local stakeholders are telephoned and informed of the Minister's decision. Phone list and decisions on who will place the calls to be developed in consultation with the Minister's Office.

Information Bulletin: province-wide distribution to media; the information bulletin would summarize the process used to arrive at the decision, key factors considered, and how the media and public can obtain further details.

Media Advisory and Media Availability: If Minister is in Victoria on day that decision is announced, the Legislative Press Gallery will be informed of Minister's availability for comments and questions. A media advisory will also be issued to regional media to inform them of the time at which Minister is available via teleconference to provide comments and answer questions. If Minister is not in Victoria, the media advisory about the teleconference opportunity would be extended to Legislative Press Gallery and other province-wide media.

Information Posted to MFR Website: The ministry web-page on TFL 23 public consultations would be updated to provide additional information on the decision. In particular, the signed decision document will be posted to the website -- subject to any mandatory severing required under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Letters to Stakeholders and to First Nations: distribute a letter to external and internal (government agencies) and to First Nations to communicate the decision and who to contact for further information. The letter may include a summary of the process used and the key factors considered.

ROLL-OUT

DATE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Announcement Day		
	Receiver advised of decision	MO/DMO
	Telephone key stakeholders	MO
	Advise ministry staff and key staff in other agencies of decision	PAB/RTEB/SIFR
	Update information on MFR web pages and post information bulletin and decision document.	PAB/RTEB/SIFR
	Media conference call with local media & press gallery	PAB/Minister
	Letters to Stakeholders	RTEB
	Letters to First Nations	SIFR
Post-Announcement Day		
	Monitor media coverage and respond as needed	PAB
	Respond to incoming MRLs as needed	RTEB

KEY MESSAGES:

- To be developed once Minister's decision is known