

# Fort St. John Pilot Project Overview and Sustainable Forest Management Plan #4: Key Changes

February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026

<http://www.fsjpilotproject.com/project.html>





# Fort St. John Pilot Project Overview

# The Fort St. John Pilot Project

The Fort St. John Pilot Project (FSJPP) was established in 2001

The FSJPP Regulation enables variances to provincial practices standards to be established, allowing for new methods of forest management at the landscape level

Public Advisory Group is required

Biannual external audits are required and sent to government

Key elements of the FSJPP and Sustainable Forest Management Plan (SFMP) were used in the creation of Forest Landscape Plans (FLPs)  
The FSJPP and SFMP are more similar to the FLP framework than to Forest Stewardship Plans (FSP) used elsewhere in the Province



# The SFMP

- ▶ Is legally required under the FSJPP regulation
- ▶ One plan for all Participants
- ▶ Identifies landscape and stand level requirements using indicators and targets
- ▶ 6-year term & can be extended up to 2 years
- ▶ Sustainable Forest Management Plan (SFMP) must be in effect for harvest and road authorizations to be issued by government
- ▶ 2 Decision makers – Ministry of Forests and Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
- ▶ Currently operating on extension of SFMP #3, originally approved in 2018
  - ▶ 2-year extension granted, current expiry is May 2026
- ▶ Annual reporting to government



# SFMP Key Variances to provincial practice standards

## Landscape Level Silviculture Strategy

- ▶ Reforestation is evaluated at the landscape level, instead of at the block level like the rest of the Province. This means we can have more competition (brush, deciduous) and lower stocking on some areas which helps to manage for other values (biodiversity, wildlife, fire resiliency, forest health)

## Permanent Access (roads)

- ▶ Is measured at the landscape level, instead of the block level like the rest of the Province, allowing more disturbance on some sites where it may be necessary (steep slopes), balanced by less on other sites

## Landscape level targets for Wildlife Tree Patches

Consideration of development from other industries (e.g., oil and gas) incorporated into SFMP



# The FOS

- ▶ The Forest Operations Schedule (FOS) is a 6-year Plan for all participants identifying all proposed blocks and roads
- ▶ Must be consistent with the SFMP
- ▶ Public notice and review by First Nations and stakeholders is required
- ▶ Participants required to submit comments and summary of revisions to the District Manager upon submission of FOS.
- ▶ Currently operating on FOS #3 submitted to Province in late 2017 with several major amendments done since that date

# SFMP #4 Update Process

Collaborative approach including First Nations,  
Participants and Government (SFMP Planning Team)

- ▶ Third party facilitation
- ▶ 28 joint meetings, 56 hours
- ▶ 46 attendees
- ▶ 96 gaps and 66 indicators of SFMP reviewed

Review with PAG over 5 meetings

Public Review and First Nations and Stakeholder  
Infoshare period

- ▶ No comments received





# SFMP #4 Key Changes



# Incorporating Land Use Plans

Indicator #66 **Incorporation of new Land Use Plans** was added that commits the Participants to incorporating applicable new Land Use Plans into the SFMP within one year of approval by Government

# Elimination of Aerial Herbicide

Indicator #58 **Herbicide Use** was added that eliminates all aerial herbicide applications and limits ground applications to where First Nations provide consent





The **Biodiversity and Wildlife Habitat Management Strategy** was added which includes four new indicators:

- ▶ Coarse Woody Debris Structure
- ▶ Protection of Biological Sites of Significance
- ▶ Migratory Birds Risk Reduction
- ▶ Visual Screening

The following indicator was amended to include mandatory moose guidelines:

- ▶ Guidelines for Species at Risk and Species of Management Concern

# Coarse Woody Debris piles

Indicator #7 **Coarse Woody Debris Structure** was added and requires Participants to create one Coarse Woody Debris structure for every 5 hectares harvested, supporting habitat for smaller animals





## Protection of Sites of Biological Significance

Indicator #10 **Protection of Sites of Biological Significance was added**, which requires 100% of identified sites of Biological Significance (i.e., mineral licks, wallows, nests, dens) to have protection measures applied.

- ▶ The protection of these sites is not new but adding this indicator standardizes the protection measures applied by Participants and makes it a legal requirement.

# Migratory Birds

Indicator #12 **Migratory Birds Risk Reduction** was added that requires Participants to implement timing restrictions and beneficial management practices that reduce the risk of incidental take of migratory birds during the nesting season

- ▶ While already a legal requirement, addition of this indicator was requested by the SFMP Planning Team for transparency





# Visual Screening

Indicator #44 **Visual Screening** was added and requires 100% of blocks adjacent to existing roads and other linear features to have retention of screening prescribed, where it exists

- ▶ Visual screening is important to provide cover for wildlife from hunting pressure

# Moose Habitat Management

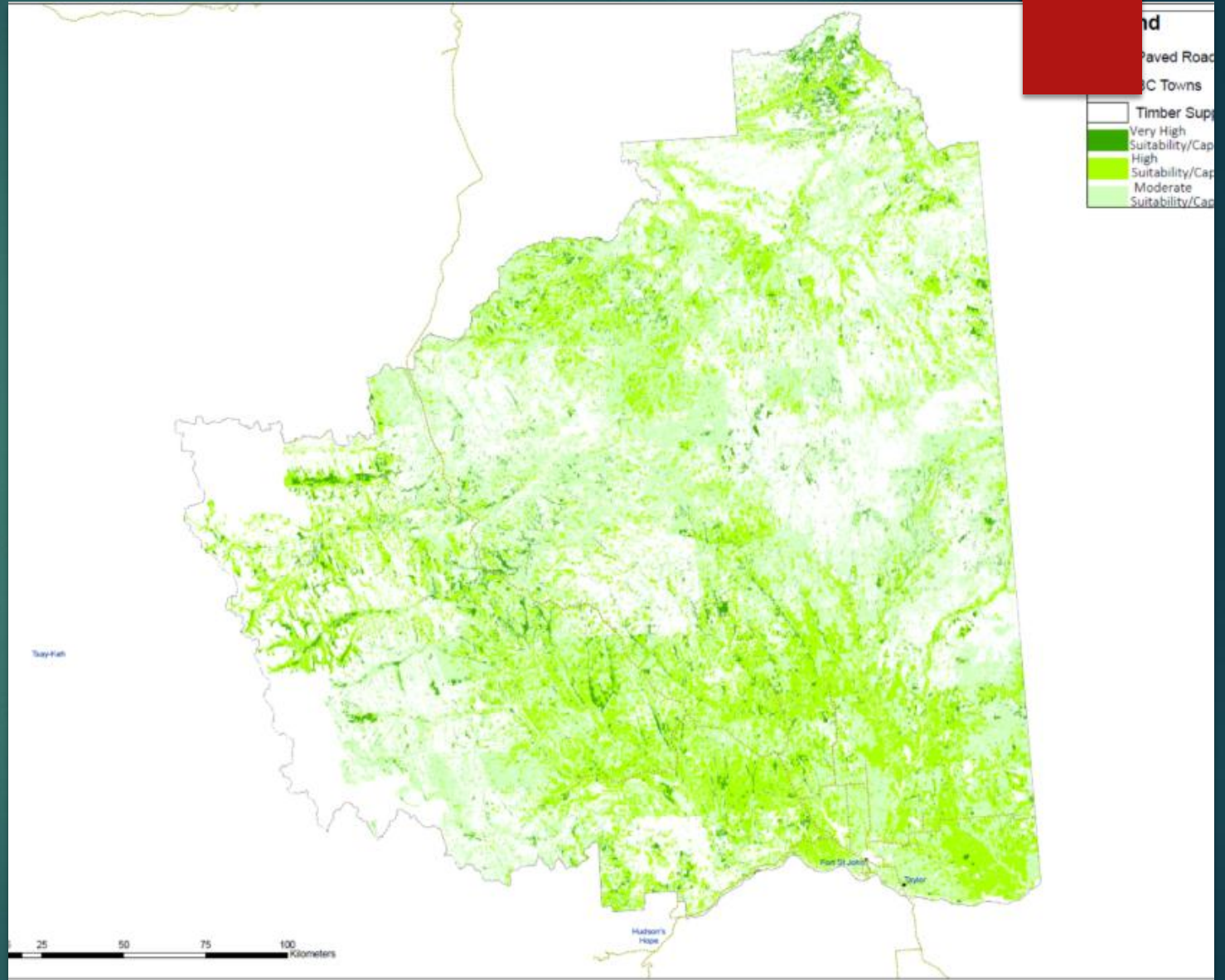
Indicator # **11 Guidelines for Species at Risk and Species of Management Concern** was amended to add mandatory guidelines for moose, within areas that have moderate to very high moose habitat capability or suitability.

- ▶ Required guidelines include promptly deactivating roads, keeping roads >200m from wetlands, using existing linear features for access and minimizing new roads, designing cutblocks with irregular boundaries, retention of visual screening, and increasing internal reserves in larger openings
- ▶ In addition to the mandatory guidelines, one additional guideline will be applied



# Moose Habitat Management

The map of the FSJ TSA to the right shows all the moderate to very high moose capability and suitability areas where the mandatory moose guidelines and one additional guideline of choice will be applied.



# Dispersed Retention increased

Indicator #5 was amended and renamed to **Dispersed Retention** and now requires Participants to retain 8-20 stems per hectare on harvested areas. The previous requirement was for 6 stems per hectare.





# Wildlife Tree Patch targets increased

Indicator #9 **Wildlife Tree Patches** was amended and the minimum amount of Wildlife Tree Patch (WTP) percentage increased for three Landscape Units:

- ▶ Halfway Landscape Unit increased from 6 to 7%
- ▶ Graham Landscape Unit increased from 4 to 7%
- ▶ Crying Girl Landscape Unit increased from 3 to 7%



# River Corridors expanded

Indicator #23 **River Corridors**, which limits harvesting within 100m of riparian reserve zones of identified major river corridors to 90% being less than one hectare in size, was expanded to include more rivers.

- ▶ This provides more representative coverage across the TSA, where it was previously concentrated in the southwest and central sections of the TSA





## More protection for small streams and NCDs

Indicator #37, renamed **Small Stream and NCD Management** was amended to increase retention requirements on small streams, wetlands and lakes and to include Non-Classified Drainages (NCDs)

- ▶ Required retention for S4 streams increased from 0% to 20% of the riparian management area
- ▶ Required retention for S5 streams, W3 wetlands and L3 lakes increased from 0% to 10% of the riparian management area
- ▶ Required retention for S6 streams or connected NCDs increased from 0% to 5% of the riparian management area
- ▶ Within 5 m of S4, S5, S6 and connected NCDs, retention of brush, non-merchantable trees, advanced regeneration and shrubs is prescribed

# Coordinated Development strengthened

Indicator # 39 **Coordinated Developments and Access Management** was expanded to include a commitment to offer to review deactivation plans with applicable First Nations and stakeholders on all roads greater than 5km in length, or any other road that is identified by a First Nations or stakeholder.

- ▶ This provides more opportunities for First Nations and Stakeholder to provide input on future access conditions



# Salvage Harvesting Prioritized

Indicator # 39 **Salvage and Sanitation Harvest** was updated to remove reference to outdated Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) management intensity zones and reaffirm the Participant's commitment to prioritizing salvage harvest wherever possible, as well as clearly defining what is considered as salvage.



# Invasive Species management strengthened

Indicator # 30 **Preventing the Spread of Invasive Plants** was added, which commits the Participants to apply Best Management Practices on blocks that are within 500m of a known invasive plant site to help prevent further spread.



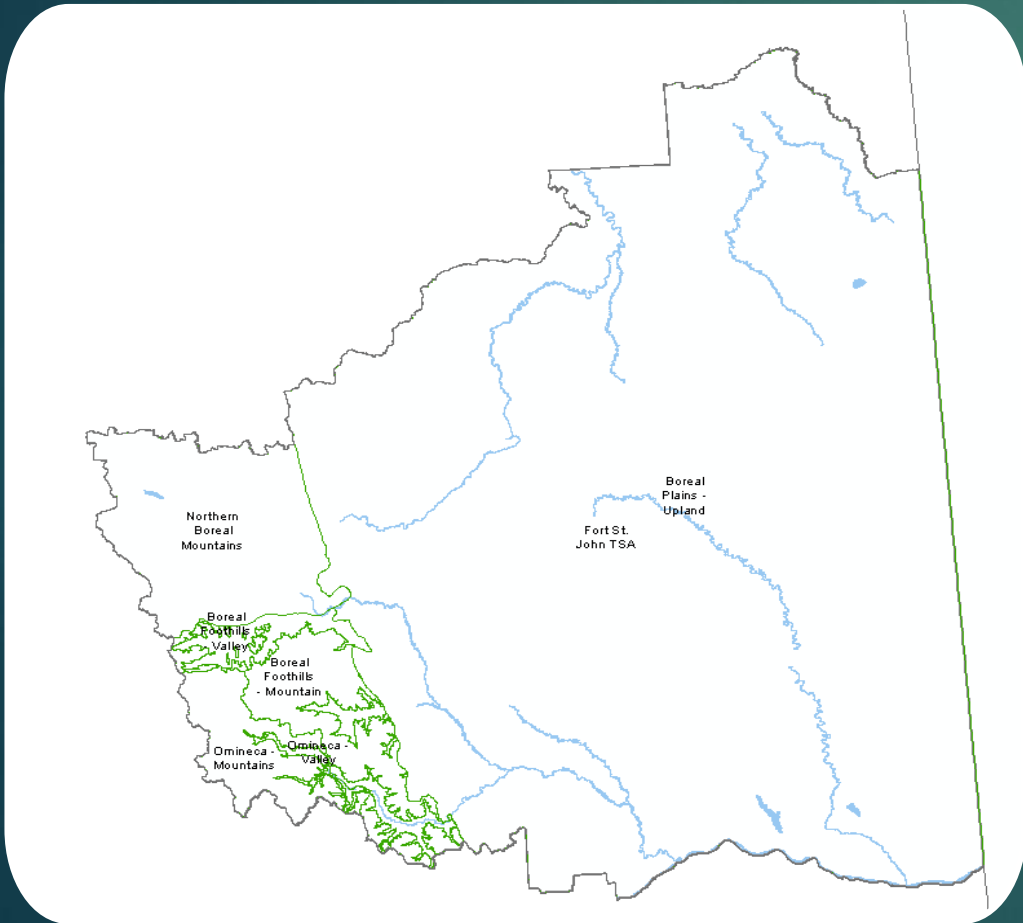


## Old Growth managed on smaller scale

Indicator #2 **Seral Stages** was amended to measure late seral (old growth) by Landscape Unit (LU), a smaller scale from Natural Disturbance Units (NDU) which was previously used.

- ▶ We heard that this was an important change to ensure that late seral stands are distributed across the landscape and traditional territories more evenly
- ▶ This means there are now 19 LUs where old seral is managed on the TSA to a minimum percentage, up from having 6 NDUs previously

# Old Growth managed on smaller scale: NDUs on the left (old), LUs on the right (new)





# Reforestation Strategy Changes

Several changes were made to the reforestation strategy to address gaps relating to increasing the amount of deciduous on the landscape and decreasing brushing:

- ▶ Increased the minimum level of intimate mixedwoods from 10% to 15%
- ▶ 30-50m buffer on block boundaries where no brushing or site preparation will occur
- ▶ Addition of Birch as an acceptable species in all mixedwood and deciduous stands
- ▶ Elimination of aerial herbicide, as previously mentioned

Additionally, we updated general language to include Treaty Rights as an overriding objective

# SFMP #4 Ongoing Discussions



# Reforestation Strategy

Discussions are ongoing with First Nations and Government on several Reforestation Strategy related gaps, primarily:

- ▶ How to include more deciduous in conifer managed stands

The plan is to submit an amendment to the SFMP to government to include these changes, once complete.



# Questions or comments?

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For more information. We are happy to meet with you and your Chief and Council if desired.