



FOR THE RECORD

Ministry of Forests and Range

REGULATION OF LOGGING IN COMMUNITY WATERSHEDS

VICTORIA- Recent media coverage has focused on the concerns of British Columbians about the potential effects of logging and road building on the quality of drinking water. Here are the facts on the rules governing forestry activities in community watersheds.

- Public forest land in British Columbia is managed for integrated use, which means that land is managed to meet a range of needs, including environmental needs such as biodiversity, and human socio-economic needs, such as natural resources, economic opportunities, recreation and water supply.
- Government agencies, including those responsible for water, including the ministries of Forests and Range, Environment and Health, are obligated to manage public land for integrated use.
- The Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA), along with its regulations and standards, governs all forestry activities, including logging, road building, reforestation and livestock grazing, that take place on Crown land in British Columbia.
- "Community watersheds" are designated under the authority of FRPA. This designation places constraints and limitations on forestry activities, such as logging or road building, conducted within a community watershed. The aim of the designation is to enable multiple uses to occur within the area, while protecting water intended for human consumption. FRPA creates legal objectives for the conservation and protection of wildlife, fish, biodiversity, soils, water, forage, visual quality and cultural heritage resources. These objectives must be observed by all forestry operators.
 - The water objective instructs forest operators to conserve, at the landscape level, the water quality, fish habitat, wildlife habitat and biodiversity in riparian areas.
- The FRPA regulations also contain a water quality objective, which applies to community watersheds that don't already have their own legal water quality objectives. This objective specifically requires operators to take precautions for water being diverted for human consumption. That is, forest activities must not negatively impact the quantity or timing of water flow, or have a negative impact on human health that cannot be addressed by water treatment processes.
- Under FRPA, forestry operators must not cause material harmful to human health be deposited or transported in water being used for human consumption.
- As well, all forestry operations must be kept away from creeks, streams and lakes. The regulations set out the minimum distances that operations may come to riparian areas, and may be as far as 50 metres, depending on the water body. As well, the rules require a greater proportion of trees to be left standing within as much as 100 metres of the water body, depending on site.
- FRPA also places constraints on road building with the aim of protecting water. For example, road construction must prevent the entry of sediment into streams, lakes or wetlands if their water is being diverted for human consumption. In addition, roads cannot interfere with subsurface flow if it contributes to a spring that is being used as source water for a licensed waterworks.
- Regulations also prevent the use of fertilizers for reforestation or other silvicultural treatments near water sources in community watersheds.

- It is illegal to cause landslides through forestry activities, so operators must take steps necessary to prevent such occurrences. For example, precautions must be taken when operating on steep slopes.
- Before starting any operations, forestry licensees must prepare plans, called Forest Stewardship Plans, describing how they intend to meet government objectives for the protection of forest and range values, including water.
- Plans must be prepared under the authority of a professional forester, an independent professional governed by the Foresters Act. Other professionals who may be involved in the preparation of plans include engineers, geoscientists, biologists and agrologists. All these professions are regulated by associations that ensure the public is protected by enforcing accountability of their members.
- Guided by the concept of professional reliance and due diligence under FRPA, government expects that professionals will conduct appropriate assessments as part of the planning process, including terrain stability assessments.
- By law, these plans must be made available for public review and comment. Generally, a licensee must advertise that the plan is available, and allow at least 60 days for input. This process allows the public, First Nations, and those whose activities might be affected by timber harvesting activities to provide input on these plans.
- Government cannot approve any plan unless the licensee proves that it has provided the public and stakeholders with the opportunity to review and comment on the plan in a manner required by law.
- Government monitors forestry activities to ensure their compliance with rules and regulations. Every year, compliance and enforcement staff with the Ministry of Forests and Range conduct over 16,000 inspections to ensure protection of natural resources and Crown interests.
- For more details on the review and comment process, see the brochure: Be Heard: Get Involved in Forest Stewardship Plan Review on the Ministry of Forests and Range website at
- The Forest and Range Evaluation Program has been established to monitor and evaluate the result of forest practices and range on forest values named under FRPA, including water quality. Its first report on water quality is expected in 2008, with data collection occurring this summer.

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