

CATEGORY 5

Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health).

KEY QUESTION(S) 17

Are there local communities (including people living inside the forest area and those adjacent to it as well as any group that regularly visits the forest)? Answer = YES

Is anyone within the community making use of the forest for basic needs/ livelihoods? Answer = NO

DEFINITIVE QUESTION

N/A

GUIDANCE QUESTION

Is this the sole source of the value(s) for the local communities?

Is there a significant impact to the communities as a result of a reduced supply of these values?

Are there values that, although they may be a small proportion of the basic needs, are nevertheless critical?

HCVF ATTRIBUTES

- Local is defined as: people who permanently reside within commuting distance by car or boat from the management unit, or where they are part of a First Nation whose lands and territories contain or are contained within the management unit; or any human community that is adjacent to the forest being audited for certification.
- A distinction is made between use of the forest by individuals (i.e. trap lines) and where use is fundamental for local communities.

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- It is reasonable to state that the SLS FMA and B9 Quota areas fulfill some needs for local and adjacent communities.

Recreation

- Recreation and tourism is a major land use activity on the FMA throughout the year. The FMA is recognized for its high scenic and natural values and is a popular destination for day trips due to good road access and the low cost of travel to the area from Calgary and surrounding communities. Kananaskis Country, overlapping the South FMA, is one of the most heavily used outdoor recreation areas in the province. The FMA has approximately 51 Provincial Recreation Areas (PRAs) within or adjacent to the FMA. These sites are 1 of 8 classes of protected area in the province and form a significant component of the range of outdoor recreation activities in the Calgary region. PRAs are often located along streams and rivers, which are central points for activities. The recreation activity provides economic benefits for gateway communities including Sundre, Canmore, Cochrane, Bragg Creek, Turner Valley, Black Diamond, and Longview. There is potential for the development of tourism facilities and services in these communities due to the restrictions of new development within Kananaskis Country.

- Activities across the FMA include: camping; off highway motor vehicle use (OHV) including 4*4 trucks, motor bikes, ATVs, and snowmobiles; mountain biking; hiking; climbing; caving; skiing (cross country, heli); snowshoeing; water sports (canoeing, kayaking, rafting); golf in adjacent communities; fishing; hunting; horseback trail riding; helicopter tours; outdoor photography; bird watching; and other wildlife viewing. There are approximately 100 guide or outfitting businesses operating in the area. Commercial filming projects, including feature films, are shot in the area. There are several leases for youth camps and special events such as mountain bike or running races are staged in the area (Alberta TPR, 2008). The area has over 3.5 million visitors annually with day use accounting for 80% of the use.

- The North FMA includes the Ghost-Waiparous area (approximately 1,500 km²) and the associated Ghost FLUZ and Ghost – Waiparous Operational Access Management Plan (GAMP, 2005).

- The South FMA is located within the Kananaskis Country FLUZ (2,083 Km²). There are 3 imbedded land use zones within Kananaskis Country designated for OHV use: The McLean Creek OHV FLUZ; the Sibbald Snow Vehicle FLUZ; and the Cataract Creek Snow Vehicle FLUZ. OHV use outside of these zones within Kananaskis Country is prohibited, with the exceptions of snow vehicle use on the Powder Face and Elbow Loop trails during designated winter periods. Motorized access restrictions and seasonal closures are common throughout the Kananaskis FLUZ.

- West Bragg Creek is a popular Kananaskis Country trailhead, located approximately 9 km west of the Hamlet of Bragg Creek in the Elbow River Watershed. There are currently 43 km of designated cross country ski trails, a hiking trail (Fullerton Loop), and 1 all season trail (Tom Snow). The Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association (GBCTA) in partnership with Alberta TPR has developed a Draft All Season Trail Plan for West Bragg Creek, Kananaskis Country (2010) to accommodate a wide variety of non-motorized users in all seasons. Many of the existing trails use old logging roads or seismic lines in sheltered areas due to lower snowfall and Chinook winds.

- The Elbow Valley is one of the busiest areas in Kananaskis Country, with almost 500,000 visitors annually. There are approximately 700 km of designated trails in the east part of Kananaskis Country. Large scale tourism developments are restricted within the FLUZ boundary.

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Industrial Land Use

- SLS has been active in the area since 1943 and employs approximately 165 employees at the Sawmill in Cochrane and with the Top Spray division. In addition, approximately 75 people are employed in woodlands contract operations. Tree planters (40-80) are employed each year, planting approximately 2 million seedlings annually.
- The Community Timber Program includes 5 small Quota holders in the B9 area north of Highway 1, one Community Timber Permit holder and one Commercial Timber Licence (Bell Pole Quota also known as Stella - Jones) in the South FMA . The "Open" category (Christmas tree, firewood permits) is administered by ASRD.
- SLS sells lumber to secondary manufacturers (e.g. Palliser Lumber, Crossfield). Local log home builders use timber from the FMA. SLS purchases industrial salvage from oil and gas and utility developments. Minor volumes of logs are purchased periodically from local private land owners (e.g. fence line clearing, etc.). Log trades are completed with a local hydro pole company in Sundre.
- Ranching and cattle grazing is a prominent activity in the area and is recognized in documents such as the Eastern Slopes Policy. As described under Key Question 16, The B9 Quota area has grazing leases and the FMA has approximately 80 overlapping grazing allotments. Both land uses have coexisted for many years, with local ranchers and SLS entering into jointly developed Grazing and Timber Agreements to mitigate the impacts of the overlapping activities.
- The FMA has 23 overlapping trap lines. Trappers are notified when SLS harvest activities are planned for their trap line areas. Discussions are held as required to mitigate the impacts of harvesting. Trapping is no longer considered a subsistence activity on the FMA.
- Oil and gas development and exploration, along with Power line development are key land use activities in the area. Oil and gas is less active on the FMA / B9 quota area than in northern parts of the Province. Companies withdraw lands through an application process administered by the Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) and the Public Lands Division of ASRD. On average, land withdrawals have ranged from 40-70 ha per year from 2001 through to 2008, with only 6 ha removed in 2009/2010. Seismic programs for exploration are not considered land withdrawals. While there is significant impact from historical programs (i.e. thousands of kilometers), no significant new programs have been completed in recent years and heli-portable techniques are used to reduce impacts.

- A Visual Sensitivity Assessment was completed during development of the DFMP to minimize impacts to aesthetic resources. The assessment incorporated input from public consultation. The area was stratified into high, medium, and low visual sensitivity classes. Rating factors included the location, surroundings, and existing condition of landscapes. The distance between the viewer and feature, the angle of view, and visual screening were addressed. Social sensitivity was considered, involving the number of visitors to an area, the length of stay, and the level of concern for particular



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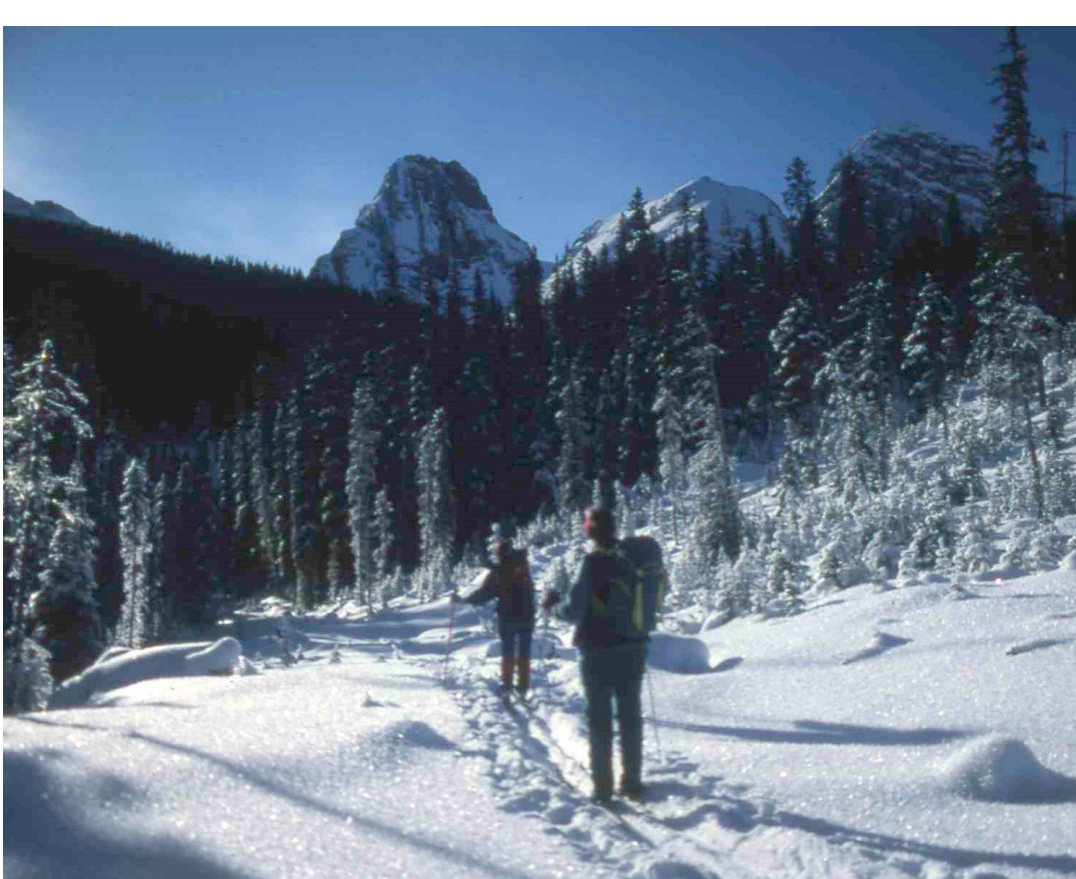
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First Nations

- The FMA plays a significant role in the culture of the 5 First Nations in proximity to the forest (see Key Question 18 for the list of First Nations). Aboriginal people routinely use the forest for hunting, fishing, berry picking, and domestic fuel wood cutting. Benefits are derived from Food and medicinal plant gathering, materials for crafts, as well as the use of sites that have cultural or spiritual significance.
- Many of the registered trap lines are held by First Nations people.
- SLS is unaware of any specific areas that supply fundamental needs or First Nations people relying on the forest for subsistence.
- In summary, The FMA/ B9 Quota area is a multiple use area with many stakeholders, providing a diversity of benefits, and supporting local communities. Local forestry jobs are dependent on resource extraction, grazing areas are critical to the ranching industry, and as described in Category 4, water is a critical resource. Outdoor recreation and tourism on the FMA/ B9 is part of *the way of life* for many people in the region and tourism related jobs are dependent on the recreation resource. Use of the forest for basic needs (food, medicine, fodder, fuel, building and craft materials, water, and income) is not exclusive to the FMA / B9, with no known or specific areas considered critical in this regard.
- The impacts of forestry activities on other stakeholders are minimized through the consultation process, collaborative planning, ongoing communication, timing of activities, and designing harvest areas with good visual management practices. Where possible, opportunities to maximize benefits to other land users are explored (e.g. upgrading or adding new trails, cooperating with the oil and gas industry on road use, enhancing range land, etc.). No HCVF has been identified under Key Question 17.



CATEGORY 6

Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).

KEY QUESTION 18

Is the traditional cultural identity of the local community particularly tied to a specific forest area? Answer=NO

DEFINITIVE QUESTION

N/A

GUIDANCE QUESTION

Do the communities consider that the forest is culturally significant?

Will changes to the forest potentially cause an irreversible change to the culture?

Is the particular forest in question more valuable than other forests?

HCVF ATTRIBUTES

- It is reasonable to state that local communities consider the SLS FMA and B9 Quota areas to have significance to cultural identity (i.e. names for landscape features; stories about the forest; sacred or religious sites; historical associations; and amenity or aesthetic value). All identified values must be addressed and many will be dealt with under other Principles. To have HCVF designation, the value or forest area must be critical to the culture.

- Traditional cultural identity is not known to be tied to a *specific* area in the forest.

- SLS recognizes the traditional interests of First Nations located within proximity to the FMA . First Nation values will be addressed as they are brought forward or identified through ongoing consultation.

First Nations Located in Proximity to the FMA

- . Blood Tribe 148 (Treaty 7);
- . Piikani Nation 147 (Treaty 7);
- . Siksika Nation 146 (Treaty 7);
- . Stoney Bands 142,143,144 (Treaty 7); and
- . Tsuu T'ina Nation 145 (Treaty 7)

-Historical resources are identified and protected as required as per the Historical Resources Act.

-A GIS based Historical Resource Predictive Model was developed for the FMA by Golder Associates. The purpose of the model is to predict where there is a high potential for historical resources and to identify potential conflicts with forestry operations and archaeological sites where inventory data is absent. The model highlights the location of all previously recorded archaeological sites within the FMA and stratifies the landbase into high, moderate and low potential for unidentified sites.

-Planned harvest blocks that fall within areas modeled as having a high potential for historical resources must have a Historical Resource Impact Assessment (HRIA) completed prior to road construction, harvesting, or scarification. Examinations include pedestrian traverse, visual examination of existing soil exposures, and judgmental shovel testing by qualified archaeological consultants.

-Strategies are developed and implemented to mitigate impacts from forestry for any new sites identified through field work. New sites are maintained in an internal GIS layer and are used for planning purposes. The sites are not made public by SLS due to their sensitive nature.

-Known and identified site specific unique and historical resource values, recorded with Alberta Culture and Community Spirit (ACCS), are considered HCVs. Site specific values brought forward by First Nations will also be considered HCVs.



CATEGORY 6

Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).

KEY QUESTION 19

Is there significant overlap of values (ecological and/or cultural) that individually did not meet HCV thresholds but collectively

DEFINITIVE QUESTION

N/A

GUIDANCE QUESTION

Are there several overlapping conservation values?

Do the overlapping values represent multiple themes (e.g. species distribution, significant habitat, concentration area, relatively un-fragmented landscape)?

Are the overlapping values within, adjacent to, or in close proximity to an identified HCV or existing conservation area?

Are the overlapping values adjacent or in close proximity to an existing protected area or candidate for permanent protection?

Do the overlapping values provide an option to meet protected areas representation requirements (i.e., overlap an

HCVF ATTRIBUTES

- The approach taken by SLS to identify High Conservation Values and forests addresses three levels of ecosystem hierarchy – landscape, habitat/community, and species.

Landscape

- Landscape level protection will be afforded by the HCVF recognition and cooperative management of two environmentally significant areas (ESA), three wildland provincial parks, two provincial parks, one natural area, one ecological reserve, two regionally significant large landscape-level forests, and two remnant large landscape-level forests. Most of the landscape-level HCV land area with a priori protection (i.e. provincial parks, natural areas, ecological reserves) occurs in the western portions of the FMA or outside the FMA to the west. These areas occur mostly in the Subalpine and Alpine natural subregions where timber harvest is less prevalent. SLS recognizes these areas as important reservoirs of biodiversity and will work cooperatively with the Alberta government to protect these areas through access management, corridor management and sharing of data and information that promotes ecosystem management.

- The two remnant landscape-level HCVFs identified by SLS provide enhanced management opportunities for lower elevation habitats in the Montane, Lower Foothills and Upper Foothills ecological regions.

Community

- Habitat-level protection will be afforded by the identification and management of 4 globally ranked forested plant communities and five rare and diverse habitat types. The rare and diverse habitat types were selected on the basis of their regional uniqueness and rarity as well as their floristic, structural and vertebrate species diversity potential. GIS mapping and analysis of ecological map units at a scale of 1:20,000 was used to select rare and diverse habitats. SLSM will mitigate impacts or enhance these habitat-level HCVFs by a combination of avoidance, access management, and timber harvest approaches that mimic natural disturbance regimes.

Species

- A total of 20 vertebrate wildlife species were selected as HCVs. Management prescriptions in the DFMP and AOPs will be designed to maintain suitable levels of high quality habitat for these species over the long-term. This will in turn accommodate long-term population viability. The 20 species-level HCVs were chosen to reflect a full range of habitat types and seral stages (Category 1 – Key Question 4 – Table 6).

In summary, the range of HCVs and HCVFs selected at different spatial scales provides significant spatial overlap of values which will optimize conservation management. No new HCVFs were identified under this question.

