



# **Spray Lake Sawmills 2016-2020 General Development Plan**

**Submitted April, 2016**

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### **Attachments:**

2016-20 General Development Plan Production Table  
2016 General Development Plan Maps (1)  
2016 Decked Bush Volume from previous season  
Five Year Access Plan

### **Distribution**

Applicable components of this General Development Plan have been provided as two hard copies and one digital copy as per section 3.3.1 of the Spray Lake Sawmills (SLS) and C05 Operating Ground Rules to the following agencies for review:

Alberta Agriculture & Forestry (AAF) Forestry Southern Rockies Area, Calgary Office

The Following Agencies are notified through AAF as a “one window” contact:

Fish and Wildlife, Recreation, and Lands.

Copies of this document will be provided to the Stoney (3 Bands – Wesley, Bearspaw and Chiniki), Siksika, Tsuu T’ina, Blood and Piikani First Nation’s bands consistent with The Alberta First Nations Consultation Guidelines.

Copies of the General Development Plan will be made available for review at the SLS annual open houses, on the SLS web site and will also be made available for review at SLS office through scheduled appointments. Please note that due to audit protocols regarding document control, original copies of this document will not be available for public distribution but will be made available for review at the above listed sites/locations.

## **Highlights**

The following is a summary of initiatives and notable highlights of the 2016-2020 General Development Plan (GDP) for Spray Lake Sawmills (SLS) on FMA0100038, CTQB090001, CTQC050008 and CTQC050009. Details on each of the points listed below can be found throughout the GDP document and tables.

- Felled inventory: The location of bush inventory volumes and storage yard volumes are attached in appendix to identify harvest blocks and legal land locations as required for Forest Protection.
- Felled Inventory: CTLB090001 did not have the log haul completed before spring break-up. There is approximately 35,000m<sup>3</sup> volume decked roadside in a couple of blocks as listed in attached bush inventory summary.
- Due to the 2015 provincial Government decision to announce a complete stop to all commercial forestry activity within the Castle Wilderness Area several components of the 2015 GDP had to be altered and have been reflected as best as possible within this 2016 submission.
- Storage Yard: There was a need to utilize a storage yard in Longview area this season due to limited storage capacity at the Cochrane Mill site location. Details regarding the storage yards are outlined later in this document.
- Ground Rules: AAF and SLS have conducted a regular annual review of the operating ground rules and use this as an opportunity to clarify wording and fine-tune them rather than a complete redevelopment. It is expected that these regular reviews will allow participants to plan revisions more systematically and to correct any inconsistencies or problems. It will also create the ability to regularly consider modifications that reflect the best and most current knowledge and tools available. At the time of this submission the 2015 review is underway but had not been completed and signed off by both parties. Harvest operations approved under this plan will follow the May 2012 version of the ground rules with the minor changes as approved in the AAF letter date March 13, 2013.
- TPRS Audits: SLS timber production numbers have been audited to April 30, 2015. Production numbers for the 2015-16 timber year have not been audited and may change following AAF audit to be scheduled later this season.
- Spray Lake Sawmills (SLS) requires continual access through the Wilkinson Summit area of secondary highway #940 to effectively operate on its' timber licenses issued by AAF. SLS has been trying to open this closed section of road from December 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> by going through several government departments but have had no success to date.

Without permission to haul over the Wilkinson Summit, SLS would have to haul the wood approximately an extra 4-5 hours south and out the Maycroft road (Hwy 517) which is not preferred due to excessive cycle times that conflict with the *Alberta Log Haul Regulations and Hour of work legislation*. The second option would be to haul out the Indian Graves road (Hwy 532) which is not possible due to safety concerns with loaded logging trucks descending down excessive and lengthy gradients.

Historically, SLS has successfully obtained annual permission to use this route providing the gates remain locked between trucks. Previous annual approvals proved to be a very lengthy and costly process to SLS making planning and sequencing very difficult. SLS would like AAF to remove the order in council which requires the road to have a seasonal closure or as a minimum develop a longer term road use agreement for this seasonal closure. SLS will be requiring this route on an ongoing basis to coincide with our approved harvest plans. Plans impacted by this seasonal closure this year include CTLC050008, CTLC050009, CTLC020026 and the Highwood River Compartment of the FMA involving an approximate volume of 145,000m<sup>3</sup>.

- SLS has incorporated the outcomes and objectives of the South Saskatchewan Regional Land Use Plan into our harvest planning and operations.
- SLS will continue to work with AAF to address the options of tee pee poles and firewood to be extracted by SLS from currently planned harvest blocks for other stakeholders as per the February 27, 2011 proposal that was approved April 4, 2011.

## **Introduction**

This GDP addresses the proposed and forecasted operations of Spray Lake Sawmills (SLS) and Crowsnest Forest Products (CFP) for the period from May 1, 2016, to April 30, 2020. It contains broad information regarding the Companies' anticipated fibre supply, the proposed harvest levels necessary to meet that supply, and the access construction and maintenance activities necessary to support these harvesting plans. CFP relies on SLS to deliver key components of plan development, operations and reporting. Work completed or submitted by Spray Lake Sawmills on behalf of Crowsnest Forest Products is synonymous with information prepared by Crowsnest Forest Products.

## **Forest Management Agreements, Quotas and Licenses**

In 2001 upon the recommendation of the Honorable Minister of Sustainable Resources Development, the Lieutenant Governor in Council, pursuant to section 16 of the Forests Act, approval to enter a 20 year renewable Forest Management Agreement with Spray Lake Sawmills (1980) Ltd was issued as FMA0100038. The FMA was renewed in 2015. This FMA was a conversion of long term quotas previously held by Spray Lake Sawmills. The quotas held by SLS in C5 include CTQC050008 and CTQC050009. Both of these quotas have been in place long term and prior to SLS's government approved acquisition of them they were held by Cowley Forest Products and Atlas Lumber. Details of an FMA can be found on the SLS web site (<http://www.spraylakesawmills.com/woodlands/forest-management-agreement/what-is-an-fma/>).

The unused FMA and C5 harvest volume as calculated from the audit of the annual cut volume for the 2006-2011 quadrant was added as carry over on the GDP table to the 2011/2016 quadrant. Volume remaining in the Longview storage yard is being requested to be inventoried and applied to the 2011/2016 quadrant cut. This request will be sent to AAF in a separate document. The 2016/21 quadrant currently does not reflect any carryover volume because AAF Production Audit results and approval letter authorizing allowable cut and carryover volume is still pending at the time of this GDP submission.

## **The Facilities**

Spray Lake Sawmills (1980) Ltd. (SLS) is an Alberta based, family owned and operated company. Founded in 1943, SLS remains a family company with the third generation of the Mjolsness family involved in its operation. The company has evolved from a portable bush mill to a state-of-the-art, high technology mill with a wood supply that is primarily sourced from crown lands under an approved Forest Management Agreement and Quota Certificates. The mill is located within the Town of Cochrane and draws its wood supply from Crown land along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains; from the Crowsnest Pass area in the south to the Sundre area in the north.

As the company name suggests, lumber is the primary product. However, SLS has expanded its product base to include a broad mix of secondary and value-added opportunities including dimensional lumber, agricultural fence posts, treated wood products, livestock bedding, woodchips (for use in pulp and paper products), bark mulch and landscaping products

SLS has achieved virtually 100% utilization of the timber delivered to the mill in Cochrane. We continue to pursue maximization of product value and fibre use through the continued application of technology for improved recovery and grade.

### **Applications of Ground Rule**

The GDP is submitted in accordance with SLS's current Forest Management Agreement (FMA) and Quota Certificates, the requirements of Spray Lake Sawmills and C05 Operating Ground Rules and area-specific standards developed with AAF-Southern Rockies Area.

The ground rules highlight the current standards and guidelines for timber harvest planning and operations, road construction and reclamation, reforestation and the integration of other forest users and values. Watershed management objectives have been a primary focus and the ground rules have a large section that addresses this through stream classifications and buffer requirements.

The ground rules represent the regulations pertaining to the Forests Act, the Public Lands Act, the Water Resources Act and the Prairie and Forest Protection Act. Provincial acts such as the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Surface Rights Act as well as federal acts including the Navigable Waters and Fisheries Acts, must also be recognized during planning and when conducting forest operations.

Many "rules and regulations" are incorporated into a harvesting plan. At the same time, forest management strategies must be flexible enough to allow the incorporation of new knowledge and technology. Adaptive Management is the application of new approaches to plans and operations and can allow us to improve our ability to meet specified planning objectives.

Please note that a higher level of detail addressing many of the Operating Ground Rules such as fish and wildlife, recreation, access management, rare ecosystems and ecosite and possible species of special management have been included in the Final Harvest Plan submissions for each of the operating areas or dispositions. Note that the SLS Detailed Forest Management Plan (FMA) and C5 Forest Management Plan (C5 Quotas) has already addressed many of these points and incorporated them into the associated spatial harvest sequence.

### **Harvest Design**

Development of the preliminary and the final harvest patterns relies on increasing levels of knowledge about the forest areas being planned. Detailed information is actively

collected during field assessments and also gathered from government agencies and stakeholders.

Sampling throughout the area provides specific information about the forest. Details about the tree species, how healthy or vigorous the forest is, what other vegetation types there are, slope and soil variability, watershed features, presence of tree diseases or insects and evidence of wildlife use are essential for selecting harvest systems.

Social considerations and existing infrastructure are also noted. Plans must reflect current access routes, recreational activities, commercial enterprises, scenic or visual quality, and other resource values. Known user groups are contacted to promote integration of activities. Government agencies may supply additional perspectives pertinent to the design.

The most intense planning stage occurs once the preliminary design has been approved and road and boundary marking commences. During this phase of planning the greatest percentage of the area is observed. The design may be refined to address site-specific conditions related to topography, timber condition, wildlife or other values based on these observations. It is during this stage in the planning process that SLS encourages other stakeholders to provide issues or concerns so that they can be reviewed and be more readily incorporated into the harvest design if substantiated.

### **Harvest Method Selection**

Timber harvesting is planned to be sustainable. All areas harvested must be reforested. The rate of harvesting is carefully calculated so it will not exceed forest growth. SLS harvest systems include Sequence Patch Cutting, semi-uniform and strip shelter woods and seed tree.

Silvicultural systems focus on both the harvest and reforestation components of forest operations. Both are carefully chosen with sustainability as the key consideration. Harvesting addresses all the steps from cutting the trees to moving the logs to roadside for loading and hauling. Selected systems must match the biological needs of the tree species planned for harvesting and the specific growing conditions of the harvest site. The amount of light, moisture, and frost exposure of the forest floor following harvest are key factors that can effect successful reforestation. The goal is to ensure each area harvested can be successfully regenerated so that new forests can grow.

### **Sequence Patch Cutting**

Lodgepole pine is dominant in over 70% of the forests in Spray Lake Sawmills FMA. In pine-dominated stands, sequenced patch cutting is the preferred harvest method, allowing objectives to be met regarding a spatial harvest sequence and stand retention strategies. Lodgepole pine seedlings have a biological need for direct sunlight in order to thrive. A disturbance that removes the forest canopy, such as patch cutting or fire, will promote lodgepole pine regeneration. This also results in an even aged forest.



Spruce and fir species are more shade tolerant. Both will grow in either full sunlight or partial shade and harvest systems can be adapted to address this characteristic. Regardless of species, appropriate harvest systems must consider the other values to be protected as well as promoting rapid regeneration of the harvested area.

### **Watershed Protection**

Watershed protection and water quality maintenance are primary goals during both planning and operational stages. Watershed protection standards and guidelines have been defined for road construction and harvesting activities. They specify the requirements for establishing crossing structures, road locations, machine-free zones and stream buffers. Watercourses ranging from ephemeral draws with water flow only during periods of heavy runoff, to rivers and lakes, are classified for protection according to the provincial guidelines.

Site-specific assessments are completed before harvest plans are developed. The assessment information is used to plan access routes and boundary locations in order to minimize watershed disturbance. All operations are planned and conducted in compliance with provincial & federal regulations and operating ground rules.

### **Wildlife**

The foothill forests represent a range of habitat types supporting a variety of wildlife species. Harvest design planning must consider how habitat supply will be affected and how habitat could be maintained over time. Monitoring our operations in relation to wildlife requirements will allow us to adapt future harvest designs to better incorporate habitat needs.

Each successional stage of forest development is important. Open areas and young forests represent early stages of forest growth. Both are necessary to sustain many species of wildlife. Harvest patterns can be planned to help maintain the full range of forest age classes across the landscape.

Human access into the forest is considered to have the greatest impact on wildlife. We strive to limit the number of access routes we develop and deactivate temporary roads as soon as possible following completion of operations.

### **Unique Features and Scarce Resources**

Spray Lake Sawmills works to identify and protect unique resources within our planning areas. The first step is to identify and assess potential sites. Information on most sites is provided by government agencies or interested individuals or groups. Sites may also be located during one of the company's ongoing assessment processes.

Historic features, sites with archaeological potential, rare plants or plant communities and other unusual natural attributes are considered during planning and operations. The location of roads and harvest patterns are designed to avoid disturbing features that require protection.

## **Forest Insects and Diseases**

SLS monitors forest insects and diseases as a standard operating procedure. AAF is notified regarding infestations or forest conditions of concern. Operating plans will be tailored to address known situations. Plans may need to be adjusted to address new information or occurrences. SLS will continue to make themselves available for scheduled meetings with AAF to review latest updates on AAF's mountain pine beetle management activities and other forest health initiatives and commits to sharing relevant information with staff and contractors.

Regarding Spruce Budworm, although present, populations are very small and there is little risk of a serious outbreak in this portion of the province.

A strategy to address Dwarf Mistletoe is presented in the DFMP. The presence of Dwarf Mistletoe is a concern within both merchantable and un-merchantable stands. SLS will continue to assess mistletoe within current planning areas. Concerns relate to potential long-term volume losses in pine stands, infestations extending beyond sequenced stand boundaries, and issues related to the implementation of effective controls.

More details on forest insects and diseases that may impact SLS please visit our web site at; <http://www.spraylakesawmills.com/woodlands/forestry-101/insects-and-diseases/>

## **Weed Control**

The development of a weed management plan is in response to the AAF Forestry Directive 2001-06 (Weed Management in Forestry Operations). All company operations will implement specific guidelines contained in Forestry Directive 2001-06 wherever practical as outlined within this Weed Management Plan.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Education and Training of staff to increase awareness of weed concerns within the companies' sphere of interest
2. Prevention, Inventory and Control of noxious and prohibited noxious weeds classified by the Alberta Weed Control Act and Regulation.
3. Activities & Initiatives that further the management of weed concerns within the companies' sphere of interest

### **1. Education and Training:**

Full time & seasonal staff and contractors will receive information regarding weed control and awareness. Training components may be included in contract start-up meetings and orientation. Items covered may include weed identification, biology, spread prevention, disposal and the Weed Control Act and Regulations.

### **2. Prevention, Inventory and Control**

#### **Prevention**

The companies will implement where practical the recommended 'Good Standards of Practice for Prevention' outlined in Forestry Directive 2001-06. Prevention measures will focus on clean equipment, limited disturbance and clean seed usage.

#### **Inventory (visual assessment)**

As SLS's area of interest consists of a large land base of approximately 700,000 ha, it is not feasible to inventory the entire area. In consultation with the AAF FMA and Quota Foresters, the Forest Health Officer, and SLS staff, the inventory will be concentrated on company access routes, with a primary focus of those held under LOC and on areas with

current year activities. The Road Use and Reclamation plan contains a monitoring schedule of company dispositions to be completed. Monitoring will occur at various stages of the operating process. During pre-harvest and preliminary work stages (planning and layout), field staff will note if weed species are encountered within planned harvest blocks or along proposed access routes. These comments will be forwarded to the AAF Forest Health Officer and documented for follow-up in the Road Use and Reclamation plan.

### **Control**

Control measures are not included in this weed management plan. Cost effective and environmentally friendly control measures can be tailored for the weed problems within the companies' sphere of interest. Areas targeted for control will implement where practical the recommended 'Prioritizing Areas for Control Measures' outlined in Forestry Directive 2001-06 and will be based on weed classification, location, and size.

Cooperative control opportunities will be pursued if practical in areas where weed infestations span multiple dispositions or border of responsibility. These areas will be targeted for control once cooperative efforts have been agreed upon so that effective control of weed populations can be achieved. Control of only part of a larger infestation is often a futile approach and a containment strategy to prevent further spread is more practical. Following training of full-time and seasonal staff, weeds that are controlled and need to be removed from a site will be properly disposed of to prevent further spread. Infestation size and priority for treatment may be determined in discussion with the Forest Health Officer, and/or the M.D. Weed Inspector or as designated by the Weed Control Guidelines when developed by the Province.

### **3. Activity Status Initiatives**

#### **Inventory and Activity Status**

As of this submission date, no weed management action areas have been identified. SLS has worked with the MD of Ranchlands on weed Co-op spray programs under their direct supervision.

#### **Initiatives**

The company has participated in MD coordinated Weed Management Co-ops when ever possible. SLS continues to collaborate with stakeholders through agreements (Road use, GTA etc) on weed control and management.

### **Environmental Stewardship**

Spray Lakes Sawmills began its pursuit of attaining 3rd party forest certification in 1996. From 1996 through 2009, Spray Lake Sawmills was certified under the Alberta ForestCare certification program. SLS obtained international 3rd party forest certification in 2013 and continues to be forest certified by internationally recognized programs.

SLS's has made the commitment, through its Chain of Custody program, that all of the wood sourced to operate it's sawmill is:

1. Not harvested from forest areas where traditional or civil rights are violated;
2. Not harvested from forest areas having high conservation values which are threatened;

3. Not harvested from genetically modified (GM) trees;
4. Not illegally harvested;
5. Not from natural forest that have been converted to plantations or non-forest use.

The move to the 3<sup>rd</sup> party internationally recognized certification program demonstrates Spray Lake Sawmills continued commitment to forest certification and sustainable forest management. The certification program also compliments Spray Lake Sawmills 72 year commitment to quality, its belief that people are the foundation of its success and that the forest is our future.

### **Slash Disposal**

SLS amended harvesting practices to recognize stump side processing more than 15 years ago. Stump side processing is a harvest practice that leaves treetops and limbs spread throughout the harvested area. Known as slash, this material has tremendous value for reforestation. Slash helps retain snow during the winter and modify soil surface temperatures during summer. Larger pieces can shelter new tree seedlings from damaging winds, frosts and large foraging mammals. The slash also helps to maintain higher soil moisture levels and with time, the decaying needles and branches become nutrient sources for the new growing forest.

In areas identified with a high volume of slash and debris it will be disposed of as per the Alberta Forest and Prairie Protection Act as well as the Forest Protection Debris Disposal Guidelines and SLS's current Operating Ground Rules.

### **Forest Protection**

As per the Spray Lake Sawmills and C5 Operating Ground Rules and the Forest Prairie Protection Act and associated regulations, SLS has developed and submitted a forest protection supplement to AAF as a component of the Annual Operating Plan. SLS also continues to work with Forest Protection on "Fire Smart" initiatives. The SLS Emergency Response Plan (ERP) identifies the process and procedures used to dealing with Forest Protection emergencies. A list of emergency contacts has also been included within the SLS ERP.

### **Reforestation Program**

Timber harvesting is planned to be sustainable. All areas harvested must be reforested. The rate of harvesting is carefully calculated so it will not exceed forest growth, these volumes are reflected in the attached General Development Plan Production Table. SLS harvest systems include sequenced patch cutting, semi-uniform and strip shelter woods and seed tree.

Silviculture systems are the prescribed strategic approaches recommended for harvesting timber and completing subsequent reforestation processes. Selected systems are chosen to match the biological needs of the tree species being harvested and the specific growing conditions of the harvest site.

Prescriptions must consider seasons of operation, species being harvested, available harvest methods, site preparation tactics, species to reforest and regeneration method. Harvest methods address felling patterns and the process of getting the timber to the roadside for hauling. Receptive sites to establish seedlings are created through site preparation, also known as scarification. Planting or seeding may accomplish reforestation. Spray Lake Sawmills relies on mechanical systems as their primary means of harvesting and site preparation.

Reforested areas are surveyed at several stages in their development. The surveys provide information on the success of the tactics and the growth of the new trees. Spray Lake Sawmills reforests all of the areas it harvests.

Lodgepole pine is dominant in over 70% of the forests in Spray Lake Sawmill's FMA. In pine-dominated stands, sequenced patch cutting is the preferred harvest method allowing ground rule objectives to be met regarding a spacial harvest sequence and stand retention strategies. Lodgepole pine seedlings have a biological need for direct sunlight in order to thrive. A disturbance that modifies the forest canopy, such as patch cutting or fire, will promote lodgepole pine regeneration.

Spruce and fir species are more shade tolerant. Both will grow in either full sunlight or partial shade and harvest systems can be adapted to address this characteristic. Regardless of species, appropriate harvest systems must consider the other values to be protected as well as promoting rapid regeneration of the harvested area.

Silviculture activities will follow operations as closely as possible and roads will be rolled back upon completion of planting activities. Silvicultural approaches are selected to improve site conditions and promote reforestation success based on the biological needs of the tree species being harvested and the specific growing conditions of the site. . The Reforestation Program is submitted under a different cover as outlined in 8.2.1 of the ground rules.

### **Storage Yards**

Log storage capacity at the Cochrane Sawmill site will not accommodate the needed volume under the approved AACs. To resolve this, storage yards have been established and will continue to be used into the future. Current storage yards include one located approx. 1km west of Longview on hwy 541 and another located in Columbia Poles yard west of Sundre. Both of these storage yards have been identified on the attached map as per section 3.3.5 of the ground rules.

The Longview yard was utilized this past season as a temporary storage yard and approximately 4,531m<sup>3</sup> of volume from the Savanna Creek license (CTL050009), approximately 12,726m<sup>3</sup> of volume from the Upper Livingston license (CTL020026), approximately 38,791m<sup>3</sup> of volume from the Porcupine Hills license (CTL050005), and approximately 5,751m<sup>3</sup> of volume from the Highwood River operating area (FMA0100038) is currently forwarded into this location. This volume is planned for haul to the Cochrane Mill site during the spring break-up and summer seasons. SLS will

report this volume to AAF monthly through the approved Timber Production and Revenue System (TPRS).

An additional temporary storage yards was developed and approved by AAF. The temporary storage yard that was approved by AAF is an old gravel pit located at W1/2 Sec 01, Twp 13, Rge 4, W5M. No volume was required to be forwarded to this location this season. This location may be required as an option for additional log storage for subsequent years. If required this will be requested from AAF under a separate agreement as per the AAF Forest Management Branch “Offsite Timber Storage and Decked Timber at Harvest Site” Directive # 2006-01

### **Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)**

Operations will proceed as per the requirements of the DFO’s Alberta Operational Statements.

### **Oil and Gas**

Oil and gas activities continue to erode the productive forest landbase. SLS supports Integrated Land Management and communicates regularly with the oil and gas sector regarding options to minimize their impacts on forest resources. Sharing of advance planning information, joint use of access corridors, and coordination of operations are a few approaches being promoted.

SLS is attempting to direct development proposals to alternate locations outside of cutblocks to minimize our investment losses, and appreciate AAF’s support for this approach when considering development applications.

### **Species at Risk**

The potential effect of the S.A.R.A. on A.A.C. and other management practices remains a concern. SLS will continue to monitor the development of regulations and applicable species recovery plans that could have implications for forest management plans and operations. SLS recognizes that its operating areas include water courses that contain populations of Pure Strain Westslope Cutthroat Trout and Bull Trout. The Operating Ground Rules address watercourse buffers independent of the fish species found in the water course and SLS is bound by these in planning and conducting timber harvesting operations.

### **Log Haul**

Log hauling into Spray Lake Sawmills mill site located in Cochrane, Alberta is primarily completed with seven axle configurations. Hayracks are an important component of the small stem log haul. Trucks have historically been only permitted for legal weights. SLS will assess the merits of hauling winter weights on an annual basis if satisfactory conditions are available. SLS will also continue with the use of picker trucks to move smaller concentrations of volume and clean-up volumes. The proposed haul routes have been identified on the attached GDP map.

SLS has provided notices that are routinely printed in the local newspapers advising of the initiation of log hauling from our various harvest locations. Timely safety bulletins

pertaining to log haul and the safe use of haul roads have also been provided to the local papers.

Haul routes and road classes within the timber dispositions are identified in the AOP submission. Roads outside the license will be either covered under road use agreements, DLOs, or permits obtained from either Alberta Transportation or the local M.D.s prior to the hauling of logs.

Hauling through the Wilkinson Summit gate closure area on highway 940 (Forestry Trunk Road) will be required from December 1, 2014 to March 15, 2015 as outlined in the Planning Considerations section of this document. SLS will continue to work with impacted stakeholder similar to previous seasons this access was required.

### **Access Management**

The Operating Ground Rules provide the procedures approved by the Government of Alberta for planning and working within wildlife zones. Temporary roads authorized under approved FHP/AOP, will be operated in accordance with the Operating Ground Rules. Access agreements required through seasonal gate closures will be obtained through Alberta Transportation authorities.

The GDP Production Table identifies areas to be harvested over the next 5 year period. At this time no Class I, II and III road developments are planned for the 5 year planning horizon. Class IV roads required have been identified on the individual FHP's submitted for each area.

### **Public Involvement Process**

#### **Communications Objective**

Communications with stakeholders are important to the smooth and efficient operation of the company. Providing ongoing information about the company's plans and activities can increase stakeholder confidence and support.

To achieve our objective Spray Lake Sawmills maintains communication programs in each of the following areas:

- To provide a variety of opportunities for meaningful public participation
- Public Awareness (Public Education)
- Response to Information Requests
- Communications with Stakeholders & Government Agencies

Various tools are used to keep the public informed and to promote input. Spray Lake Sawmills encourages anyone with an interest in our operations to contact us.

#### **Collaborative Planning Sessions**

After carefully considering the stakeholder comments, a 3 step, stakeholder collaborative harvest planning approach was initiated by the company.

Step 1: SLS facilitates interested parties to develop preliminary harvest designs on a forest compartment basis using GIS, the Detailed Forest Management Plan and the General Development Plan. This step provides stakeholders the opportunity to collaborate with SLS, prior to any field work or harvest plan submission to the government.

Step 2: If specific concerns are raised during step one, SLS will arrange a field tour with stakeholders to address specific concerns on the ground and make any needed mitigations etc. prior to any field work or harvest plan submission.

Step 3: SLS follows-up with participants showing how the collaborative planning work was used to develop draft final harvest plans. Stakeholders then have the opportunity to comment on the draft plans prior to harvest plan submission. SLS then follows up with stakeholders, posts the results from the session on the company website, writes the final harvest plan and submits it to the government.

### **Open Houses**

Spray Lake Sawmills holds an annual open house in early May, in both the Crowsnest Pass and Cochrane locations. The public is welcome to view the Woodlands General Development Plan, Five Year Access Plan, Final Harvest Plans and Annual Operating Plans. Exact dates will be posted on SLS web site and advertised in local newspapers. Participants are invited to provide input into the various stages of plan development. Knowledgeable staff is available to respond to comments or questions and record input.

As critical benchmarks are reached during planning processes, additional open houses may be held for stakeholders to review developments, ask questions and provide comments for further consideration.

### **Company Website**

Spray Lake Sawmills' website contains information about the company's background, mission and various departments' operations. It also provides a method of contacting the company via email. Visit our website at [www.spraylakesawmills.com](http://www.spraylakesawmills.com).

### **Public Advisory Committees**

SLS first established a Public Advisory Committee (PAC) in 1995 to assist SLS in the development of a harvest plan for the McLean Creek Area. In 2001, SLS signed a Forest Management Agreement with the Province of Alberta. An integral component of the FMA is the Detailed Forest Management Plan (DFMP). A requirement of DFMP development was to have a meaningful public involvement process. SLS set-up a public advisory group in 2002 to help define DFMP objectives, guide and coordinate public involvement activities and critique plan development. This group's mandate ended with the approval of the DFMP in 2007.



Based on these past successes, SLS has established two standing Public Advisory Committees. For the northern, FMA operations, a PAC was established with the mandate “to act as a review panel and sounding board for the company’s monitoring program, provide feedback on development of the company’s operating ground rules, and provide advice on on-going stakeholder communications”. In the south, SLS established the Crowsnest Pass PAC with the mandate “to act as a review panel and sounding board for the company’s operating plans within the C5 Forest Management Unit”.

PAC members represent a broad spectrum of interests including:

- Environmental
- Motorized and Non-motorized recreation
- Ranching
- Oil and Gas
- Community members
- Municipal Districts
- Fish and Game
- Alberta Government (Forestry)

To view the Terms of Reference, Committee membership and meeting notes for each of the PACs, please visit the SLS website ([www.spraylakesawmills.com](http://www.spraylakesawmills.com)).

### **Other Communication Tools**

A variety of methods for accommodating public input have been evaluated and used by SLS over time. Communication tools need to be open, transparent and accessible. The key is to promote dialogue and appreciation for varying points of view. Participants in a public involvement process are not expected to be technical experts, but to provide insight on how a broad spectrum of societal values might be integrated with natural landscape developments.

SLS has also developed a Blog web site to provide stakeholders and other members of the public the opportunity to ask questions and make comments regarding any of SLS’s activities. The Blog site is <http://sprayftp.com/wordpress/?p=90> or the link can be found on the SLS web site identified earlier in this document.

Other communication tools considered include surveys, questionnaires, social media, focus groups, workshops and newsletters. Spray Lake Sawmills have selected several of these public involvement tools in the past to garner a more complete scope of public opinion and will continue to use the entire tool box. Tools are selected for their ability to:

- Be effective and meaningful for the participants
- Be time efficient in meeting strategic planning benchmarks
- Be cost effective

### **Public Consultation and Respect in the Workplace Policy**

Spray Lake Sawmills has an established respect in the workplace policy that promotes an atmosphere of trust, teamwork, cooperation and respect. In the spirit of that policy, Spray Lakes Sawmills employees are required to discontinue consultation in the event of the

public exhibiting threatening or abusive communication or behavior; making false accusations that serve to defame the company; or otherwise demonstrate consultation with Spray Lake Sawmills is not in good faith. SLS will also discontinue consultation if the member of the public falsely misrepresents themselves or their stakeholder group affiliation to obtain personal gain.

### **Emergency Response**

An effective safety program includes a plan to deal with emergency response in the event of medical incidents, forest fires, or environmentally hazardous spills. This annual plan provides step by step instructions for addressing various emergencies that could potentially occur in woodland operations.

Spray Lake Sawmills uses the STARS Emergency Link Centre (ELC), a 24 hour multi-function communications centre established to meet the needs of industry working in remote locations. The ELC works closely with partners in the Chain of Survival, including first responders, 9-1-1 dispatch, EMS, fire, police, search and rescue, and hospital personnel to ensure efficient and effective patient care and transport. In the event of an emergency, one call to the ELC will link emergency service providers, medical personnel, and appropriate emergency transportation providers in one conversation – saving valuable time.

Spray Lake Sawmills contractors deploy a SLS Emergency Response Trailer to a central location near harvesting sites. The trailer contains equipment required for various types of emergencies and is equipped to safely store environmentally hazardous materials.

A review of the Emergency Response Plan (ERP) is completed each year with staff and contractors. Personnel are trained in first aid and spill response and emergency drills are completed periodically.

The Emergency Response Plan is shared each year with various stakeholders, groups, or individuals who may be present in the areas where we are operating. Copies of the can be found on SLS web site at; <http://www.spraylakesawmills.com/woodlands/safety/> and the associated Emergency Response Plan Link

### **Grazing Timber Agreements**

Overlapping grazing and timber harvest operations on approved dispositions will conform to direction outlined in Grazing Timber Agreements (GTA) developed as per the Grazing Timber Integration Manual. GTAs conform to higher order plans, policies, and guidelines such as Integrated Resource Plans (IRP), Forest Management Plans (FMP), Species Recovery & Management Plans, Fire Smart Community Protection Plans, Resource Integrated Decisions, Eastern Slopes Policy, Fish and Wildlife Policy for Alberta, and Integrated Resource Management strategies. Details of GTA's are outlined in the Final Harvest Plans and Annual Operating Plan.

### **FMA Planning Considerations**

The following planning considerations outline the current year's strategies and plans for the Spray Lake Sawmills Forest Management Agreement area and B09 Quota. It is strongly advised the stakeholders and other user groups refer to the attached GDP Production Table to review the 5 year planed harvesting activities by compartment and license areas to provide any feedback.

### **Jumping Pound Creek**

The General Development Plan, following the approved Spacial Harvest Sequence, reflects Jumping Pound Creek volume sequenced for 2018/19 season as well as 2019/20 & 2020/21 seasons. The Forest Harvest Plans outlining the details of these volumes are being prepared for submission to AAF for review and approval.

### **McLean Creek**

The General Development Plan, following the approved Spacial Harvest Sequence, reflects McLean Creek volume sequenced for 2016/17season as well as 2019/20 & 2020/21 seasons. The Forest Harvest Plans outlining the details of the 2016/17 planned volumes have been prepared and submitted to AAF.

All designated trails used or crossed during harvest operations will be maintained and restored to use upon harvest completion. All AOP roads will be fully reclaimed once reclamation and silviculture activities have been completed with the exception of the portions of roads that were previously designated trails. These areas will be reclaimed back to a functional trail.

### **Atkinson Creek Compartment**

The General Development Plan, following the approved Spacial Harvest Sequence, does not have any volume planned for the 5 years outlined in this GDP.

### **Coalcamp Creek Compartment**

The General Development Plan, following the approved Spacial Harvest Sequence, does not have any volume planned for the 5 years outlined in this GDP.

### **Sullivan Creek**

The General Development Plan, following the approved Spacial Harvest Sequence, reflects Sullivan Creek volume sequenced for 2017/18 season as well as 2018/19. No special planning considerations noted to date. Any issues noted will be included in the FHP submitted for this area.

### **Highwood River Compartment**

The Highwood River Compartment FHP HW2012\_17, submitted to AAF December 17, 2012. Approval for this FHP has been received and volume is sequenced in the 2016/17 Annual Operating Plan. The Wilkinson Summit portion of Hwy 940 is closed seasonally. SLS will try to sequence operations so as to not interrupt this closure; however, weather, ground conditions and other unforeseen factors may require access through the Wilkinson Summit during its regular period of closure. SLS plans on balancing operations so that only one road, either the Lost Creek Road or Hwy 940 (Wilkinson Summit), be open at any given time. The ability to achieve this will largely depend on receiving approval in a timely manner. SLS will follow the Standard Operating Practice for requesting access on seasonal and road closure areas should access through closed areas or seasonal roads be required.

### **Ghost River**

The General Development Plan, following the approved Spacial Harvest Sequence, does not have any volume planned for the 5 years outlined in this GDP.

### **CTQB090001**

The CTQB090001 quota harvest area was submitted under 2 separate FHP's. FHP B92014\_19, submitted to AAF February 5, 2014 and approval has been received. FHPB92016-21 has been submitted to AAF and was waiting for approval at the time of submission of this document. SLS has included the harvest volume from both plans in the 2016/17 Annual Operating Plan sequence volume. Access into this harvest area is currently addressed through an adjacent private land agreement.

### **C5 Planning Considerations**

The following planning considerations outline the current year's strategies and plans for the Spray Lake Sawmills & Crowsnest Forest Products C5 Quota areas. It is strongly advised the stakeholders and other user groups refer to the attached GDP Production Table to review the 5 year planed harvesting activities by compartment and license areas to provide any feedback.

### **General Considerations**

#### **CTLC050008 (Wintering Creek)**

The sequencing of the CTLC050008 license has been moved to the 2016/17 season due to revocation of the Beaver Mines CTLC050015 harvest approval because of the Castle Wildland Park announcement by Alberta Environment and Parks. This license has been identified on the GDP production table since 2005/2006. Until this year no volume has appeared on the GDP table since 2006/2007. The stakeholder consultation and layout commenced in November 2015. Layout has been completed in the Dry, Station, Pocket and Daisy Creek drainages and a Grazing Timber Agreement has been signed for the license. An interim FHP for the completed layout will be submitted April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

Consultation and layout of the remaining SHS will continue this season. The FHP for the entire license is anticipated to be completed and submitted in the summer of 2016. Harvesting activities are planned for the summer of 2016 in this license.

### **CTLC050015 (Beaver Mines)**

The 2015/16 AOP approval to operate this license was revoked in an AAF letter to SLS on September 4<sup>th</sup> 2015.

### **CTLC050003 (Race Horse Creek)**

The Final Harvest Plan for the Race Horse Creek license was submitted and approved under the 2009 OGR's by AAF in 2011. Volume from this license has been identified in the GDP and posted on our SLS web site for the last three years. This harvest plan will follow the conditions outlined within the Whitebark Pine directive. Sequencing of this volume will occur this season and is linked to the status of the Atlas Road.

Please note a reduction in this years GDP production table of 9196m<sup>3</sup> planned and approved volume from the 2014-2015 table. This reduction is due to the planned access road location in relation to a threatened pure strain Westslope Cutthroat Trout stream. Having reviewed the "Alberta Westslope Cutthroat Trout Recovery Plan 2012-2017" SLS has deemed this volume inaccessible.

### **CTLC050009 (Savanna Creek) and CTLC020026 (Upper Livingstone)**

All these older harvest plans have been continually re-submitted and approved under the 1994 Operating Ground Rules and original TM118 form as agreed to by AAF. Some of this volume has also been recognized in the General Development Plan and approved for harvesting since 2006.

Required consultation with all applicable user groups have been met and signed Grazing Timber Agreements for all the above timber licenses are in place.

Additional volume has been identified as a result of the Spatial Harvest Sequence Maps in Savanna Creek and the Upper Livingstone timber licenses. In 2010, SLS requested these two timber licenses to be extended to the east to incorporate the available timber. In 2011, the request to extend the timber license boundaries to the east was approved by AAF and the additional estimated volume has been identified in the General Development Plan Production Table. Harvesting activities occurred this past season in both these licenses and approximately 12,726m<sup>3</sup> of volume from the CTLC020026 license and 4,531m<sup>3</sup> of volume from the CTLC050009 is currently decked in the Longview storage yard. This volume will be hauled to Cochrane during spring & summer of 2016.

Harvesting activities are planned for both these license in the winter of 2016/17.

### **CTLC050005 (Porcupine Hills)**

In 2010, SLS requested to expand the existing license boundary to incorporate the spatially available timber according to AAF's Spatial Harvest Sequence Maps. In 2011, the license boundary was amended and now includes the Lyndon Creek and Trout Creek area.

The Final Harvest Plan was submitted to AAF on May 31, 2013 as a required contingency harvest area due to the 2013 spring flood that compromised the Alberta Transportation and MD roads & bridges that access the original planed harvest areas in Savanna and Livingstone Creek licenses. AAF approved this FHP submission August 12, 2013. Harvesting activities occurred during the 2013/14, 2014/15, & 2015/16 seasons in this area. Approximately 39,791m<sup>3</sup> of volume harvested in the 2015/16 season is currently decked in the Longview storage yard to be hauled to Cochrane during spring & summer of 2016. Additional volume has been sequenced from this license and has been identified in the General Development Plan Production Table.

### **CTLC050018 (Todd Creek)**

In 2010, SLS requested the addition of two new timber licenses to incorporate the spatially available timber according to AAF's Spatial Harvest Sequence Maps. In 2011, both licenses were approved and issued to SLS. One of these new licenses was CTLC050018 often referred to as Todd Creek. Preliminary planning and stakeholder consultation has already started on this license. Discussions with the Todd Creek local land owners regarding the Todd Creek harvest plans have commenced since the 2011 Open House where SLS displayed preliminary plans of this area for the first time. The harvest volume planned for this area is reflected in the General Development Plan Production Table.

### **CTLC050019 (West Chain Lakes)**

In 2010, SLS requested the addition of two new timber licenses to incorporate the spatially available timber according to AAF's Spatial Harvest Sequence Maps. In 2011, both licenses were approved and issued to SLS. One of these new licenses was CTLC050019 often referred to as West Chain Lakes. The harvest volume planned for this area is reflected in the General Development Plan Production Table. The consultation process and layout of this license began in March 2015. Layout north of highway #532 in the Iron and Corral Creek drainages was completed in the fall of 2015. A Forest Harvest Plan for this layout will be submitted in the summer of 2016. Layout south of highway #532 and stakeholder consultation will continue in 2016.

### **CTLC020025 (Lower Livingstone)**

Additional volume has been identified as a result of the Spatial Harvest Sequence Maps in the existing Lower Livingstone timber license. In 2010, SLS requested the timber license to be extended to the east to incorporate the available timber. In 2011, the request to extend the timber license boundary to the east was approved by AAF and the additional estimated volume has been identified in the General Development Plan. Layout and the consultation process for this license commenced in 2013. The harvest volume planned for this area is reflected in the General Development Plan Production Table.

### **First Nations Consultation**

SLS's First Nation consultation of the GDP continues to follow the "Alberta's First Nation Consultation Guidelines on Land Management and Resources Development".

Spray Lake Sawmills (SLS) will continue to commit to meetings with impacted First Nation's bands. SLS has prepared a draft Memorandum-of-Understanding (MOU) for each band's consideration. The consultation process is ongoing with the Stoney (3 Bands – Wesley, Bearspaw and Chiniki), Siksika, Tsuu T'ina, Blood and Piikani first nation's bands and has included a variety of correspondence methods that may include letter, e-mail, meetings, field tours etc. SLS has developed an internet based copy of the 2014/15 GDP submission on our web site that is accessible by the public and link has been provided to the First Nation bands. This web site will be updated with a copy of the 2016-2020 GDP submission once it has been approved. SLS will be contacting each of the bands to provide a personal review of the current plan. It is our hope that this consultation strategy that includes both personal contact and web based information sharing will make the plans more readily available to the First Nations bands and will also allow the bands more flexibility in their review process.

## **Spray Lake Sawmills 2016-2020 General Development Plan Submitted by:**

Rob Berndt  
Spray Lake Sawmills  
Operations Manager

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_