

**Whitehorse and Southern Lakes Forest Resources
Management Plan**

What We've Heard So Far

Summary of Public Input Received

From May to November, 2014

Prepared by:

The Whitehorse and Southern Lakes FRMP Joint Planning Committee:

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Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 The Purpose of the Public Consultation	4
1.2 The Public Consultation Process:.....	4
1.3 Public Consultation Events	5
1.4 How the Consultation Results Are Organized:	6
1.5 Limitations of the Data	6
1.6 Disclaimer	7
2.0 RESULTS FROM SURVEYS ONLY:	7
2.1 Where do you live?.....	7
2.2 Do you harvest timber in the region?.....	7
2.3 What kind of timber?.....	7
2.4 Approximately how much timber do you harvest per year?.....	7
2.5 Where do you harvest timber ?	8
2.6 Do you harvest non-timber forest resources (Berries, cones etc.) in the area	8
2.7 Do you use fuel wood for heat?	8
2.8 What activities do you currently do in the region's forests?.....	9
3.0 RESULTS FROM SURVEYS, MEETINGS AND OPEN HOUSES:	9
3.1 What do you value most about forests in the region?	9
3.2 What forested areas in the region are most important to you and why?	10
3.3 What do you see as the main concerns or challenges for forest management in the area? Why?	11
3.4 What is your vision for the forests in the region? How should they be managed in the future?	13
3.5 Are there areas in the region where timber harvesting should be allowed?	15

3.6 Are there areas in the region where timber harvesting should not be allowed? 15

3.7 Are there areas of special concern where special forest management considerations should apply? What areas and what kinds of special management considerations? 16

3.8 How would you like to be kept informed on the Forest Management Plan and provide your input?..... 16

4.0 NEXT STEPS:..... 17

1. INTRODUCTION

This report gives a summary of comments received to date during the first round of public consultation on the Whitehorse and Southern Lakes Forest Resources Management Plan (FRMP). Public comments on this process are still being submitted. People are encouraged to continue to do so via the survey available on the website <http://yukonforestplanning.ca/>. All comments submitted will be considered.

This report summarizes only comments received before December 1, 2014.

The Whitehorse and Southern Lakes FRMP process is a joint initiative of the Government of Yukon, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the Carcross Tagish First Nation. The planning process is being led by a FRMP Joint Planning Committee (JPC), which has one representative from each participating government. The JPC designed and implemented the public consultation process described in this report, and prepared this report.

The objective of the Whitehorse and Southern Lakes FRMP is to facilitate the sustainable development of forest resources in the planning area and provide high level strategic direction for forest resources management in different planning units in the area.

The FRMP Terms of Reference are in Appendix A. The planning area is shown in Appendix B.

1.1 The Purpose of the Public Consultation

The purpose of this first phase of consultation was to introduce the FRMP planning process to the public, gather information on forest resource use in the planning area, and seek input on key public concerns and interests regarding forest management in the area. The FRMP Terms of Reference (available online) identifies several issues the plan must address. The consultation process was designed to facilitate discussion on these issues and seek broad public input on them.

1.2 The Public Consultation Process:

The consultation process included a variety of methods. These included:

- **Website:** A public website was created to give information on the FRMP, including a description of the plan's purpose, planning area, work plan, and public consultation process. The website included the consultation survey and identified how input could be provided.
- **Survey:** A survey was prepared for people to fill out and submit input to the JPC. This survey was made available on the FRMP website and distributed at all meetings and open houses. Completed survey forms were either submitted by e-mail, mailed in to the address provided, or placed into a survey box which was prominently displayed at each open house.
- **Meetings with Boards and Councils:** Members of the JPC met with four Local Advisory Councils (LACs), two Renewable Resources Councils (RRCs), and the Yukon Fish and

Wildlife Management Board. The purpose of the meetings was to introduce the FRMP and the consultation process, and seek input on key concerns and interests.

- **Public Open Houses:** Six public open houses were held. Each open house included a short presentation on the FRMP and several display panels on the planning area and forest management matters. JPC members were present to talk with the public about their use of the area, forest management issues, and seek input on key values, concerns and interests.
- **Publicity:** Notices to let the public know about the open houses were placed in advance in local newspapers and on local posters.

Consultation input was recorded in a variety of ways. At meetings and open houses, verbal input was recorded in notes made by JPC members. Survey responses were received and used to identify the key issues and variety of forest use. Letters were sent to the JPC email address by stakeholders such as the Yukon Wood Products Association, the Canadian Wildlife Service and Yukon Conservation Society. All of the surveys, letters, and verbal comments were captured and recorded and used as the basis for this report.

1.3 Public Consultation Events

Consultation input was recorded at the following consultation meetings and open houses:

Date	Event	# people attending	# surveys completed	# of verbal comments recorded
May 6:	Meeting: Lorne Mountain LAC	10	-	12
May 7:	Meeting: Tagish LAC	10	-	7
May 13:	Meeting: Ibex Valley LAC	6	-	4
May 14:	Meeting: Marsh Lake LAC	10	-	5
May 27:	Open House: Lorne Mountain	13	10	49
May 28:	Open House: Marsh Lake	11	1	60
May 29:	Open House: Hootalinqua	7	2	10
June 2:	Meeting: Carcross Tagish RRC	8	-	12
June 3:	Open House: Carcross	11	4	73
June 4:	Open House: Whitehorse	22	11	85
June 5:	Open House: Tagish	13	11	83
June 9:	Meeting: Laberge RRC	8	-	10
June 12:	Meeting: Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board	12	-	10

1.4 How the Consultation Results Are Organized:

All comments made in survey responses and during consultation events were recorded, summarized and grouped into common themes. The comments included in this report are organized according to the broad topics identified in the survey. Within each broad topic, comments are grouped into common themes that pertain to that topic.

This report does not include every individual comment that was made during consultation. It includes only the more frequently made comments. Most comments in the report have two or more **xx**'s placed next to them. The number of **xx**'s next to each comment indicates approximately how many different respondents made that same, or similar, comment.

In general, comments are listed in the order of how often they were mentioned. More frequently mentioned comments are listed first. The least frequently mentioned themes are listed last.

For a complete listing of all comments, including comments that were noted only once during consultation, please contact the Joint Planning Committee Secretariat as per the information on page 17.

1.5 Limitations of the Data

The data in this report is intended to be used in a qualitative way only. This data is not suitable for detailed quantitative or statistical analysis. This is because only the more frequently mentioned comments are included, the sample size of respondents was relatively small, the nature of the open house discussions was intentionally relaxed and open, and the method of recording verbal responses was flexible.

It is also recognized that the public open house consultation format does not attract all members of society equally. This may result in some groups being under-represented. For example, it was noted by the JPC that First Nations representation at the public open houses was relatively light. For this reason, First Nations concerns and interests are likely under-represented in this report. The JPC recognizes that more consultation needs to be done with First Nations to gain their input.

Another factor to consider when analyzing the data gathered is representation from the industry group, the Yukon Wood Products Association (YWPA). The YWPA attended all meetings, but only provided one written letter comment for the industry; YWPA represents numerous companies, so the input is only reflected once.

Despite the above limitations, the JPC feels that the consultation results in this report are a good reflection of the values many people place on forests in the planning area. The comments are also summary of the important concerns and interests many people have on forest management in the region.

1.6 Disclaimer

The comments included in this report only reflect what members of the public told the JPC during consultation. They reflect a wide diversity of opinions. In some cases, the comments are very different. In some cases, they represent conflicting views.

The comments in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the JPC, the Government of Yukon, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council or the Carcross Tagish First Nation.

2. RESULTS FROM SURVEYS ONLY:

The consultation process included a written survey and verbal discussions at meetings and open houses. A number of topics were covered only by the surveys. These topics were not discussed in any rigorous manner during open houses and meetings.

This section identifies information that was gathered through the surveys only.

2.1 Where do you live?

- Mt Lorne / Annie Lake Road xxxxxxxxxx
- Tagish xxxxxxxxxx
- Whitehorse xxxxxxxx
- Carcross, xxxx
- Marsh Lake (Judas Creek)xx
- Lake Lebarge xx

2.2 Do you harvest timber in the region?

- YES xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- NO xxxxxxxx

2.3 What kind of timber?

- Fuel wood xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- Saw Logs xxxxx
- Building Logs xx
-

2.4 Approximately how much timber do you harvest per year?

- 1 - 2 cords xx
- 3 - 5 cords xxxxxxxxxxxx
- 6 – 10 cords xxxxxxxxxx
- 25-50 Saw logs

2.5 Where do you harvest timber ?

- Tagish & 10 Mile Rd area xxxxxxx
- On my property / near my home xxxxxx
- Annie Lake Road xxxxx

2.6 Do you harvest non-timber forest resources (Berries, cones etc.) in the area

- YES xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- NO xxxxx

What kind of non-timber forest resources do you harvest?

- Berries xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- Cranberries xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- Mushrooms xxxxxx
- Willow xxxx
- Flowers xx
- Rose Hips xx
- Saskatoons xx
- Herbs & medicinal plants xxx

2.7 Do you use fuel wood for heat?

- YES xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- NO xx

a) Approximately how much fuel wood do you burn per year?

- 1 - 2 cords xxxxx
- 3 – 5 cords xxxxxxxxxxxx
- 6 – 10 cords xxxxxxxxxxxx
- 2-3 tons of wood pellets

b) Do You:

- a) Cut your own firewood? xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- b) Buy your own firewood? xxxxxxxxx
- c) Sell your own firewood? xx

c) Where does your firewood come from?

- a) Local? xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- b) From outside the region (Haines Jct) xxxxxxxxxxxx

2.8 What activities do you currently do in the region's forests?

- Cut fire wood xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- Hiking xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- Cross-country skiing xxxxxxxxxxxx
- Walking (with and without dogs) xxxxxxxxxxxx
- Harvesting natural foods & berry picking xxxxxxxxxxxx
- Camping & recreation xxxxxxxx
- Hunting & fishing xxxxxxxx
- Biking xxxxxx,
- snowmobiling & ATV xxxxxx
- Wildlife viewing / bird watching xxxxx
- Dog mushing / skijoring xxx
- Working xx

3. RESULTS FROM SURVEYS, MEETINGS AND OPEN HOUSES:

This section identifies responses that were recorded through written responses from surveys, input recorded during consultation meetings, and input recorded during discussions at the open houses.

The responses are organized according to the topics identified in the surveys, which were the same topics discussed during meetings and open houses.

3.1 What do you value most about forests in the region?

Natural environment

- The natural environment, clean, healthy, quiet, untouched: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- Intact wilderness (No ATVs or cleared areas) xxxxxxxx
- No people xxx

Flora and Fauna:

- Abundant wildlife (Moose, Caribou, Black and Grizzly Bears, Deer, Porcupines, Coyotes, Fox, Wolf, birds) xxxxxxxxxxxx
- The plants: xxx

Recreation Opportunities

- Accessible recreation trails (hiking, skiing, mushing, horses, etc.): xxxxxxxx
- A place to be active and exercise xxx

Harvesting Opportunities

- The ability to cut my own fuel wood xxxxx

- Potential to create jobs and contribute to the local economy **xx**

Aesthetics

- Scenery is beautiful **xxxxx**
- Tranquility **xxx**

It's home

- They are part of our community **xxx**
- Forests provide a home. **xxx**

3.2 What forested areas in the region are most important to you and why?

All areas are important xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

Areas used for recreation & trails xxxxxxxxx

- hiking, dog mushing, skiing, old mining roads

Areas where people live xxxxxxxxx

- Mount Lorne / Annie Lake area **xxxx**
- Cowley Creek, Mary Lake, Wolf Creek **xxxx**
- Areas close to my home **xxxx**

Wood cutting areas xxxxxx

- 10 mile area **xxx**
- Annie Lake Road area

Shorelines, rivers & river valleys (that's where the most use is) xxxxxx

- Tagish River with heritage RCMP post **xxx**
- Wheaton River Valley **xx**
- Waterways, lakes, rivers, wetlands **xx**

Important habitat areas xxx

- old growth forests **xx**
- Mitchie Creek-only salmon spawning area in region

Park areas:

- Agay Mene **xx**

Wood supply and demand

- The timber resource in the region is limited. What is sustainable? **xxxxxxxxxx**
- This close to Whitehorse, there will be a lot of demand for cutting firewood **xxxx**
- Will the demand for fuel wood increase in the region? **xx**

Unauthorized and unregulated timber cutting

- There is illegal and unauthorized firewood cutting **xxxxxxxxxxxx**
- Monitoring, regulating and policing wood cutting is a concern **xxx**
- More patrolling is needed on weekends **xxx**.
- People often leave a mess and don't meet requirements for cleaning up **xxx**

Competing interests

- There are many competing interests in the forest: housing, timber cutting, wilderness, trapping, mining, recreation, viewsapes and agriculture **xxxxxxxx**

Commercial timber harvesting

- Don't want commercial operators taking all the wood, leaving nothing for locals **xxx**
- A lot of wood is being cut by commercial operators **xx**
- Great care must be taken with any extensive logging **xx**.
- Industry people want to know how much can be harvested and where **xx**

Timber harvest methods

- Clear cutting is bad **xxxx**
- Clear cutting increases soil temperatures **xx**
- Clear cutting is good if it mimics natural disturbances. **xx**
- Selective logging is bad if it changes forest composition: **xx**
- There is a lack of public knowledge on different harvest methods and their impacts on the environment **xx**

First Nation concerns

- FN culture and heritage are inseparable from habitat and wildlife **xxx**
- First Nations are interested in timber opportunities **xx**
- Most people don't know where First Nations settlement land is located. **xx**
- People are illegally taking timber off of First Nation land **xx**
- There is uncertainty regarding responsibility for policing timber cutting on FN land **xx**

The carbon cycle and climate change

- The impacts of forestry on the carbon cycle is a concern **xx**
- What about climate change? New species may be coming up from BC. **xx**

3.4 What is your vision for the forests in the region? How should they be managed in the future?

Type and scale of timber harvest

- The scale of harvesting must be sustainable xxxxxxxxxxxx
- Keep harvests small scale, based on local needs xxxxxxxx
- Support selective logging practices xxxxxx
- Support controlled clear cutting that maintains healthy habitat xxxxxx
- Use harvest methods, including clear cuts, that mimic natural disturbances xxxxxx
- Cutting dead wood is a priority xxxxxx
- Green wood harvest in old age stands can improve habitat and reduce fire risk xxxxx
- Clear cutting is bad & ugly xxx
- Harvesting must be socially acceptable xxx
- Greenwood cutting should not be allowed xxx
- Support private and community woodlots xxx
- Support salvage harvests in burned areas and areas cleared for development xxx

Fire Management

- Need more fuel abatement with large fire breaks and fire smart areas: xxxxxxxxxxxx
- Consider controlled burns for fuel abatement and habitat management: xxxxxxxxxxxx
- Do large scale fire abatement planning for all settled areas: xxxxxxxxxxxx
- Use green wood timber harvest to reduce fire hazard: xxxxxxxx
- Populated areas need escape routes in case of fires xx
- Assess how fire suppression affects habitats xx

Commercial forest industry development

- Support small scale industry to meet local needs and create employment xxxxxxxxxxxx
- No large scale industrial development xxxxxxxx
- Do not support any commercial forestry development xxxxxx
- Support value added wood products, not raw log exports xxx
- Assess the demand for timber & fuel wood in the area xxx
- Need to understand where harvesting would be possible xx
- Timber should be available for industry on an environmentally sustainable basis xx
- Commercial fuelwood cutting creates jobs, reduces fossil fuel imports, and reduces fire risks xx
- Support a local saw mill in the area. xx
- First Nations are interested in forest industry opportunities xx

Designated personal fuel wood areas

- There should be more designated personal fuel wood areas xxxxxxxxxxxx
- Local people should have priority for wood cutting in local areas xxxxxxxxxxxx
- Commercial operators should not compete with locals for fuel wood xxxxxx

- Fuel wood cutting areas need better access **xxx**
- The region should supply more of its own fire wood **xx**

Fish and wildlife habitats:

- Maintain important wildlife habitat, especially for caribou **xxxxxxxxxxxx**
- Maintain watershed protection, water quality and salmon habitat **xxxxx**
- Maintain connectivity in wildlife corridors and habitats **xxxxx**
- Manage old growth forests for healthy habitat **xxx**
- Protect riparian habitats, marshes and waterfowl breeding habitats **xxx**
- Restrict cutting in certain areas or during certain seasons to protect wildlife **xx**

Keep forests healthy and natural

- Keep forests healthy, intact and natural with minimal disruption **xxxxxxxxxxxx**
- Use existing natural disturbance patterns to guide forest management **xxx**
 - Identify acceptable disturbance thresholds for wildlife and watersheds **xxx**
 - Maintain natural retention areas to protect biodiversity **xx**
 - Maintain structural diversity within forest stands **xx**
- Include Special Management Areas **xx**
- Protect food harvest areas **xx**

Controlled access

- Use existing access. No new trails, unless needed **xxxxxxxx**
- Roads should be rehabilitated back to nature **xxxx**
- Roads need to be constructed and managed to limit impacts **xxx**
- Use of trails needs to be restricted at certain times of year **xx**
- Keep important wilderness lakes and habitat areas free of roads **xx**
- Some areas need 2 access and escape routes in case of forest fire **xx**
- Need more control on the use of trails and roads **xx**

Planning process and implementation

- Need to recognize all land uses in the area and leave options open for non-forestry development (eg: residential or agriculture) **xxxxxx**
- Need a lot of community involvement and communication **xxxxxx**
- Land Use Planning should be done before forestry planning **xx**
- Use an adaptive management approach that can be adjusted with time **xx**

First Nations interests

- Need to inform people on where settlement lands are, increased signage: **xxxxx**
- First Nations rights to harvest wood on their own territory must be respected: **xxx**
- First Nations are interested in economic development opportunities **xx**
- Traditional knowledge must be considered **xx**

Education on timber harvesting

- Need education on different timber harvest methods and their impacts **xxxxxx**
- Need more education on where people can and cannot cut **xx**

Use a balanced approach

- Use balanced approach that considers all values **xx**
- Protect cultural, ecological, recreational and economic values **xx**
- Identify some areas for harvesting and other areas for protection **xx**

3.5 Are there areas in the region where timber harvesting should be allowed?

Fire Smart and fires break areas

- Timber harvest should be coordinated with Fire smart planning: **xxxxxx**
- Harvest timber should be done to make large fire breaks **xxxx**
- Many areas have dense over grown forests that could use thinning **xxxx**

Areas close to where the wood is needed (but not too close to residences)

- Areas reasonably close to homes with good road access **xxx**
- Areas need to be far enough away to not disturb residences or recreation trails **xxxx**

Dead wood

- Concentrate on dead wood harvest (standing dead, fire killed, beetle killed) **xxxxxxx**

Over grown and old forests

- Concentrate harvest in overage forests and blow-down areas **xxxx**

General

- All public land should allow for timber harvesting **xxx**
- Need more areas available for timber harvest **xxx**
- Timber cutting for personal use only **xxx**

In areas being cleared for other developments

- Support salvage timber harvest in areas that need to be cleared for development **xx**

3.6 Are there areas in the region where timber harvesting should not be allowed?

Important and sensitive habitat areas:

- Critical and unique habitats **xxxxxxxxx**
- Michie Creek, critical salmon spawning habitat **xx**
- Old growth forests with wildlife and habitat values **xx**

Recreation areas:

- Not close to recreation trails (skiing, dog mushing, snowshoeing, etc.) **xxxxxxxxxx**
- Not in areas used for recreation **xxx**

Residential areas:

- No cutting close to people, community centres or residential areas **xxxxxxxxxxxxx**
- No cutting around Cowley Creek esp. Pike Place **xxxx**

Environmentally sensitive areas:

- Environmentally sensitive areas: **xxxxxxx**

Riparian, wetland and watershed areas

- Close to rivers, lakes & water sources **xxxxxxx**
- Wetlands **xxxx**

Cultural Areas:

- Special cultural and sacred areas. **xx**
- Visually important areas **xx**

3.7 Are there areas of special concern where special forest management considerations should apply? What areas and what kinds of special management considerations?

- Important and sensitive habitat areas: **xxxxxxxxxx**
- Shorelines and riparian areas: **xxxxxxx**
- Areas close to residences **xxxx**
- All timber harvest plans should be subject to public review & input: **xxxx**
- Recreation areas and trails for ski/snowshoe/mushing trails etc **xxx**
- Personal use firewood cutting areas **xxx**
- Old growth forests **xxx**
- cultural and heritage sites **xxx**

3.8 How would you like to be kept informed on the Forest Management Plan and provide your input?

- Public meetings/ open houses **xxxxxxxxxxxxx**
- E mail **xxxxxxx**
- Internet and website **xxxxxxx**
- Send out information to interested/affected councils and groups **xxxx**
- Hold meetings with interested/affected councils and groups **xxxx**
- Need public consultation during Timber Harvest Planning too: **xxxx**

4. NEXT STEPS:

The consultation results in this report reflect the values many people in the area place on forests in the planning region. They also identify many key public concerns and interests regarding forest management in the area.

These values, concerns and interests will be carefully considered by the Joint Planning Committee as work continues on the development of the FRMP. They will also be used to help define key topics to undertake further work on and to address in the plan.

The planning process for the Whitehorse and Southern Lakes FRMP is scheduled to continue into 2015 - 2016. The process will include technical workshops on specific forest management topics as well as additional public consultation sessions at key stages in the planning process.

For more information on the FRMP planning process and upcoming workshops and events, please visit the FRMP web-site at <http://www.yukonforestplanning.ca> .

If you would like to reach the Joint Planning Committee directly to discuss any concern or interest related to the FRMP, please contact the following by mail, telephone or email:

Whitehorse/Southern Lake Joint Planning Committee Secretariat

c/o

Forest Management Branch

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