



May 27th, 2024

**VIA EMAIL:**

Michelle Connolly, MSc  
Prince George, BC  
Conservation North

Dear Ms. Connolly

Thank you for your letter on May 6, 2024, outlining your concerns about the proposed logging of blocks in the Dome Creek/Walker Creek area. We appreciate Conservation North's dedication to environmental conservation and the preservation of natural forests. We value your input and take your concerns seriously.

As an operational part of the Ministry of Forests, B.C Timber Sales (BCTS) is responsible for the management of approximately 20% of the province's public forest land. BCTS' primary goal is to ensure the province receives fair market value from publicly held timber. Harvest of this timber provides significant jobs and economic benefits throughout BC. BCTS respects the recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review and is operating consistent with Provincial implementation direction related to old growth deferrals. The Prince George Business Area is also following the letter of expectation from the Prince George district manager associated with candidate old forest areas (COFA). We appreciate the concerns of community members and environmental groups and will consider their feedback in any decisions related to the possibility of future development in the Dome Creek/Walker operating area.

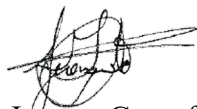
We appreciate the work that was done to write the Plant and Lichen Inventory of the Walker Drainage, British Columbia. BCTS follows the BCTS Provincial Sustainable Forest Management Plan and Policy I have attached. Specifically, objective 4, Conservation of Biological Diversity, provides us with some critical information on how BCTS manages for the conservation of biological diversity. BCTS operations are consistent with legislation, regulations, government orders, and higher-level plans regarding wildlife habitats and biodiversity. This consistency is focused at both the landscape and stand levels. At the landscape level, habitats that are significant for biodiversity objectives or to conserve sites with viable occurrences of significant species of concern are identified, e.g. Old Growth Management Areas (OGMA), Aspatial Old Growth Biodiversity Orders, Ungulate Winter Ranges (UWR), and Wildlife Habitat Areas (WHAs). BCTS is implementing direction from the Province and Ministry related to the Old Growth Strategic Review recommendations, including deferral of harvest of identified priority old growth ecosystems. Landscape level targets are established for various attributes and BCTS collaborates with other land managers

to ensure consistency with these targets across the landscape. The Province collects forest inventory data that includes forest cover type, age, height, and habitat information. Current Vegetation Resource Inventories (VRIs) are maintained across all timber supply areas and Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping (TEM) and Predictive Ecosystem Mapping (PEM) are conducted where ecosystem mapping is required to enable ecosystem-based management or for other purposes as determined by provincial agencies. At the stand level, field reconnaissance is completed to determine the forest cover types to be managed and to identify wildlife habitats that may be of concern or require special management. For each block harvested, a percentage of the area must be retained as Wildlife Trees as specified in the FSP. Wildlife Tree Retention Areas (WTRAs) must be identified and mapped to ensure their integrity over the long term. BCTS protects large trees as required by the Special Tree Protection Regulation. We have identified trees within the Walker Operating Area which meet these specifications and are being protected accordingly.

Regarding the noteworthy species section of the report, BCTS manages and has standard operating procedures for both Species at Risk, as defined by the SARA, as well as provincially red and blue listed species/ecosystems at risk. BCTS manages this through all development phases, from planning through to harvesting. As per our SFI Certification standards, BCTS requires all contractors working on BCTS contracts to complete mandatory training, related to the management of both SARA species and provincially listed species/ecosystems at risk. Ecosystems that meet the definition of a wetland in the Forest Planning and Practices Regulation are identified at the field development stage and managed according to the legal standards defined in the regulations and the BCTS FSP. This removes many of the ecosystems at risk in this area, as well as their hydrophytic flora.

This report identifies findings of SARA species, blue and red listed species and ecosystems at risk. If the location and details of these findings could be passed along, BCTS will be able to implement the special management strategies which pertain to these unique species and ecosystems. I was unable to find the Appendices referenced in the report provided.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Greenfield, R.P.F  
Timber Sales Manager, Prince George  
250-649-4398  
Jeremy.Greenfield@gov.bc.ca