

Communications & Public Involvement Plan

2021 Lesser Slave Lake Regional Forest Management Plan

March 31, 2017



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1 Introduction

Tolko Industries Ltd, Vanderwell Contractors 1971 Ltd. and West Fraser Mills Ltd. (the Companies) hold five Forest Management Agreements (FMA) in the Slave Lake Region and have been granted approval by the Government of Alberta (GoA) to jointly and cooperatively develop and submit a regional Forest Management Plan (FMP) for the region. The Lesser Slave Lake Regional Forest Management Plan (LSLRFMP) is scheduled for submission to the GoA on October 1, 2020. Table 1 shows the Forest Management Units (FMU) and related FMA holders for the six FMUs in the region.

Table 1. FMUs and FMA holders

FMU	FMA Holder	FMA#
S16	No FMA	
S17	Tolko, Vanderwell and West Fraser	FMA0600043
S19	Tolko	FMA9700033
	Non-FMA Portion	
S20	West Fraser	FMA 9000028
S21	West Fraser and Tolko	FMA0200039
S24	Vanderwell	FMA9700036

While FMU S16 and the non-FMA portion of FMU S19 do not form part of the Companies' FMA areas, they will be included in the LSLRFMP due to their proximity to the FMA areas and the fact that the Companies have been issued timber Quota Certificates in these areas. Primary timber management responsibility in S16 and the non-FMA portion of S19 is retained by the GoA, however, the Companies have agreed to undertake Public Consultation for the LSLRFMP on these areas on behalf of the GoA.

The geographic location of the FMAs and FMUs included in the regional plan are shown in Figure 1.

A Plan Development Team (PDT) has been assembled to guide the development of the LSLRFMP. The PDT includes a multi-disciplinary team of technical and experienced professionals from the Companies, the GoA and consultants assembled to develop strategies and review technical matters regarding plan development, including communications and public involvement planning and implementation.

The LSLRFMP Terms of Reference (ToR), approved on February 22, 2017, describes the process to develop the plan and includes milestones, as outlined in Table 2. The timelines are estimates and will be reviewed at regular intervals by the PDT as the LSLRFMP is being prepared.

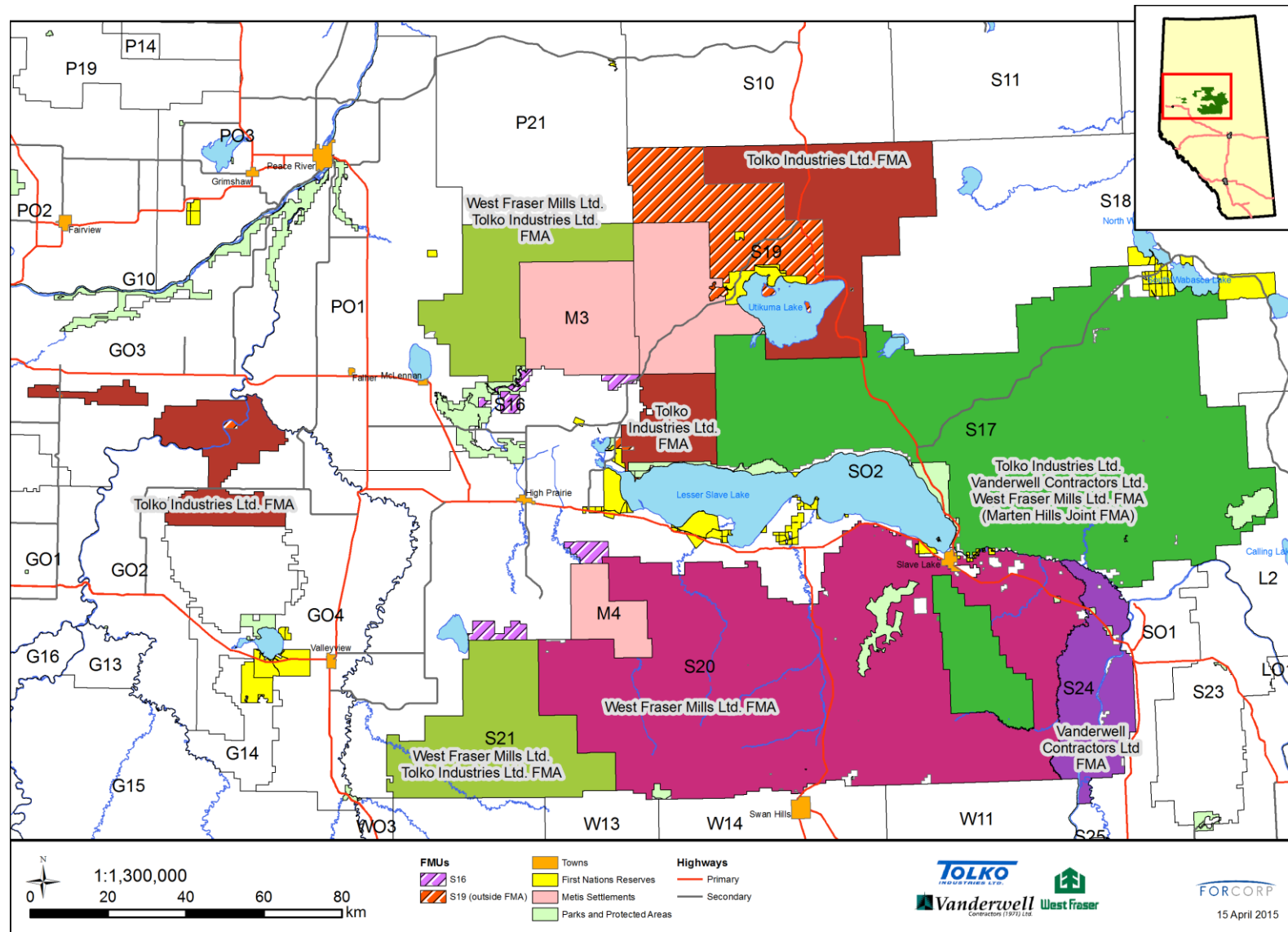


Figure 1. Location of FMAs and FMUs in the Lesser Slave Lake Region Forest Management Plan

Table 2. LSLRFMP milestones

LSLRFMP Component	Anticipated Submission
Revised Terms of Reference	January 2017
Public Involvement Plan	January 2017
First Nations & Métis Consultation Plan	January 2017
Landscape Assessment	September 2017
VOIT Development	November 2017
Final AVI	March 2019
Yield Curve Development	January 2020
Net Landbase Development	January 2020
Spatial Harvest Sequence	June 2020
Submission of LSLRFMP	October 2020
LSLRFMP approval	May 2021

2 Goal and Objectives

FMPs in Alberta are developed in accordance with the Alberta Forest Management Planning Standard Version 4.1, April 2006 (Planning Standard), which is modelled on the requirements of the Canadian Standard Association (CSA) Z809 standard for sustainable forest management. The CSA standard (section 5.0) places significant emphasis on public participation in forest management planning.

The development of an FMP is a complex exercise involving analysis and integration of extensive amounts of data and stakeholder input and numerous iterations of forest management scenarios. Completing a regional FMP involving five different FMAs adds tremendously to this complexity. The Companies recognize that the successful development, submission and approval of the 2021-2031 LSLRFMP will rely in significant measure upon well planned and executed communications involving internal initiatives, aimed at facilitating a successful flow of information among PDT members, as well as an external communications plan that will be concerned with informing, engaging and obtaining feedback from stakeholders outside the PDT. The Public Involvement Process is designed to ensure that significant and relevant public input is garnered for use in forest management planning and activities. A separate process has been developed to guide consultations with local First Nations and Métis Settlements regarding the development of the LSLRFMP.

The Companies take their responsibility to communicate and consult with all stakeholders seriously and are committed to giving sincere consideration to stakeholder comments and concerns as well as to being open and transparent about their intentions as it relates to current and planned forest management activities in the region.

This document is intended to provide a framework for the solicitation of stakeholder and general public input into the development of the LSLRFMP and covers the period up to and including the approval of the plan and will continue to guide communications and consultations during the LSLRFMP timeframe *i.e.*, 2021-2031. A revised communication plan for ongoing implementation will be submitted as part of the LSLRFMP.

2.1 Timeline

The Companies will commence with stakeholder identification as soon as this Public Involvement Plan is approved. Public consultations specific to the LSLRFMP are expected to begin in 2017 and will continue until plan approval in April 2021. Table 3 presents the estimated timelines for consultation.

Table 3. Consultation Timeline

Component	Completion Date
Re-establishment of the FRAC in High Prairie	October 2016
Stakeholder Identification	March 2017
Consultation – Project Introduction	December 2017
Consultation – Review VOITs	December 2018
Consultation – Review SHS	March 2020
LSLRFMP submission and approval	April 2021

3 Internal Communications

Given the scope of this project, it is imperative that effective internal communications and procedures for gathering and storing information be implemented at an early stage to ensure the Plan Development Team has access to the information it needs to produce a comprehensive long-term regional forest management plan that is scientifically sound, reflects multiple perspectives and is consistent with government requirements.

The LSLRFMP PDT, as defined in the ToR, will be the main audience for the internal communications. The PDT includes representation from the FMA holders, the GoA, Quota Holders and an independent Plan Coordinator. PDT members are listed in Table 4.

The scope of the LSLRFMP covers a broad range of topics and areas, requiring a diverse knowledge and skill set beyond the expertise of the PDT members. To address this, the PDT will identify the need for experts in areas or topics and will invite subject matter experts to attend meetings. The role of the subject matter experts will be to provide advice or undertake analysis for to the PDT.

A Plan Coordinator has been retained by the FMA holders and is charged with the responsibility to schedule, chair and administer PDT meetings and activities throughout the development of the plan. The PDT will meet regularly, as needed, with approximately 8 to 10 meetings anticipated each year.

Internal communication during plan development will be the responsibility of the Plan Coordinator. All documents, meeting notes, spatial data, internal/external communications and any other information relevant to the LSLRFMP will be made available in a timely, concise and consistent manner to all PDT members.

Table 4. Plan Development Team

Role	Member
Chair / Plan Coordinator	Ted Gooding, FORCORP
Tolko Representative	Tim Gauthier, Manager Planning & Sustainability
Vanderwell Representative	Mike Haire, Woodlands Manager
Vanderwell Representative	Kyle Chisholm, Operations Forester
West Fraser Representative	Bert Larocque, Woodlands Manager
West Fraser Representative	Tim Burns, Woodlands Manager
West Fraser Representative	Keith Branting, Management Forester
West Fraser Representative	Todd Bailey, Management Forester
West Fraser Representative	Terry Kristoff, Management Supervisor
GoA Planning Lead	Jennifer Koch
GoA Senior Forester	Amy Wotton
GoA Forester	Caleen Warren-Currier
GoA Senior Fisheries Biologist	Myles Brown
GoA Senior Wildlife Biologist	Jim Castle
GoA Forest Analyst	Cosmin Tansanu
GoA Senior Resource Analyst	Greg Greidanus
Millar Western Forest Products	Bob Mason
Atikameg Timber Ltd.	Fabian Gray
1104384 AB Ltd.	Roger Marcoux

Internal communication during plan development will be the responsibility of the Plan Coordinator. All documents, meeting notes, spatial data, internal/external communications and any other information relevant to the LSLRFMP will be made available in a timely, concise and consistent manner to all PDT members.

Individual PDT members will be responsible for ensuring that all relevant information, activities and decisions are effectively communicated within their own organizations.

FORCORP's online web-based project management system, eTracker, will be used to effectively manage each step of the project. As project tasks are assigned to team members, they are entered into the system allowing them to be tracked and monitored for progress. Documents relevant to tasks can also be linked to the task and stored on the eTracker system for ease of access at any time. While this is not intended to be a delivery system for data and results, it ensures that relevant project documents are stored in a structured way within eTracker. FORCORP's in-house cloud service will be used as a delivery system to allow secure transfers of data, results and other larger sized digital files between team members. This is a secure system, hosted on FORCORP servers that can be used to exchange larger files.

4 External Communications

4.1 Introduction

External communication processes and mechanisms are required to raise awareness and actively involve external stakeholders and the general public on the process of LSLRFMP development and the potential impacts of planned activities. First Nations and Métis Consultation is dealt with in a separate plan.

4.2 Objective

The objective of external communications will be to identify all stakeholders that may have an interest in the LSLRFMP area and the forest management activities planned for the area, and to describe processes and mechanisms for engaging and responding to stakeholders and the general public.

4.3 Audience

External communication efforts will be focussed on the following audiences:

- Other industrial forest users operating within and adjacent to the LSLRFMP area, such as oil and gas companies, grazing lease holders and trappers;
- Non-industrial forest users, such as recreational groups;
- Government representatives, elected and non-elected, at the provincial and municipal levels;
- Communities in and adjacent to the LSRFMP area; and
- The general public.

4.4 Process

4.4.1 Stakeholder Identification

The Companies will start by compiling a list of all interested or potentially interested parties from the above listed broad audience who may wish to be kept informed of LSLRFMP progress and public participation opportunities. This list will be initially based on existing information received by the companies and their ongoing consultation efforts. Processes to identify interested parties include communication with the advisory committees as well as local radio and newspaper and other mechanisms as outlined in the communication mechanisms section below. The preferred mechanism for communication will be requested from interested stakeholders.

4.4.2 Stakeholder Consultation

As the LSLRFMP will outline a schedule of forest management activities over a 20 year period and plan development will span multiple years, the intent is to consult with stakeholders on a regular and ongoing basis in order to ensure adequate time is made available to cover key topics, share relevant information and to explore concerns that may arise. The key topics to be covered in the consultation process include:

- Project Introduction;
- Performance Standards (VOITs);

- Spatial Harvest Sequence (SHS); and,
- LSLRFMP Submission and Approval.

Using the various mechanisms described in section 4.5 below, the Companies will share information on the LSLRFMP status and content throughout the plan development process. Any specific requests for information will be addressed through the PDT.

4.4.2.1 Project Introduction

Following identification of interested stakeholders, the Companies will inform them in writing, by means of letter distributed by mail or email (according to stakeholder preference), of the Companies' intention to develop the LSLRFMP the key topics to be addressed and anticipated timelines. The notification will also invite the interested party to participate in plan development through various mechanisms, such as involvement in a public advisory committee or open house attendance, to be described in the notification.

4.4.2.2 Performance Standards (VOITs)

Performance standards will be developed by the PDT for plan implementation, monitoring, and reporting, and will take the form of Values, Objectives, Indicators, and Targets (VOITs). The Planning Standard contains the minimum VOITs required for Forest Management Plans in Alberta. Since the VOITs were created in 2006, the government has approved new policies and thus some of the VOITs have been updated to align with current policy. The PDT recognizes this and will modify the VOITs as necessary to ensure that they align with current policy and practice.

Once a draft set of VOITs has been developed for the regional plan, they will be shared with interested stakeholders for review and input prior to finalization.

4.4.2.3 Spatial Harvest Sequence

The SHS is a key outcome of the FMP process as it identifies, through the Timber Supply Analysis (TSA) process, the forested stands that the Companies will focus their harvesting activities on during the first 20 years. The first 10 years of the SHS is of particular significance as this is the time period over which operational level planning is implemented in order to direct where harvesting will occur in the short term. In addition, since the SHS represents strategies identified for achieving social, economic and environmental objectives, the GoA monitors performance to ensure that significant deviations from the SHS do not occur over this period. As such, this is a key component where input from stakeholders will be considered to mitigate areas of concern, where possible.

While this milestone focuses on the SHS as an end product, in practice discussions to identify areas of concern will be ongoing throughout the consultation process. The draft SHS will be shared with interested stakeholders for review and feedback once the TSA process is complete.

4.4.2.4 LSLRFMP Submission and Approval

All communication and consultation efforts completed during the development of the LSLRFMP will be recorded and reported on as part of the final plan submission for GoA approval. The Companies will notify all stakeholders once approval for the LSLRFMP is obtained and will provide access to the finished product.

4.5 Communication Mechanisms

4.5.1 Public Advisory Committees

Public advisory committees will be the primary avenue for public involvement in the development of the LSLRFMP. Two separate committees to serve the Slave Lake and High Prairie communities will be utilized. Both public advisory committees have approved terms of references that define roles, responsibilities and expectations of members.

4.5.1.1 Slave Lake Forest Public Advisory Committee

The Slave Lake Forest Public Advisory Committee (SLFPAC) was formed in January 1997 and is the main avenue for public involvement regarding forest management and planning in the Slave Lake region. Currently, the SLFPAC consists of members of the local community, GoA officials, local trappers, forestry and oil & gas industry representatives. The group meets a minimum of twice per year but has met up to 10 times per year when required. The Companies will review SLFPAC membership and if necessary undertake a recruitment initiative to ensure adequate representation from a broad range of stakeholder groups.

4.5.1.2 Forest Resource Advisory Committee (High Prairie)

The Forest Resource Advisory Committee (FRAC) was initiated on January 18, 2000 to provide a mechanism for public input into the development of the 2005 Forest Management Plan for the joint Tolko Industries Ltd. and Gordon Buchanan Enterprises Ltd. (now West Fraser Mills Ltd.) FMA. The FRAC included a diverse membership of stakeholders including representatives of the local community, local government, Métis Settlements, the GoA, the Whitefish Lake Atikameg First Nation and local trappers as well as forestry and mill representatives. Following completion of the 2005 FMP, the FRAC was disbanded in October 2007. As of September 27, 2016, the FRAC has been re-initiated to provide an avenue for public involvement for the LSLRFMP in the High Prairie area. A minimum of two meetings will be held per calendar year, with the option to increase the meeting frequency as necessary.

4.5.2 Open Houses

Open houses will be used to provide a forum for the Companies to present information and solicit public input on the development of the LSLRFMP. Open houses will be held in communities where the level of interest warrants it and is likely to include the communities where successful open houses have been previously held such as: Slave Lake, Swan Hills and High Prairie. It is anticipated that open houses will be held a number of times during plan development at some of the locations. The number and location of open houses will be finalized as the plan progresses. The open houses will be publicized through news releases, advertisements in local media and through direct contact with interested parties. Content and information to be exchanged at each open house will vary as the plan progresses and would include information such forest planning frameworks, plan development milestones, VOITs, areas eligible for harvesting, local interests and SHS.

In addition to the open houses described above, open houses will also be held in First Nations and Métis Communities where requested. These are described in the First Nations and Métis Communities Consultation Plan.

4.5.3 Resource User Consultations

The Companies will meet informally with special interest groups and individual stakeholders, such as trappers as required to discuss specific issues of concern. These less formal meetings often involve field trips and are important in acquiring local knowledge and expertise and assist in developing mitigation methods to address specific areas of concern. Information gathered during these meetings and field trips will be documented and utilized in the plan development where possible.

4.5.4 Public Awareness

As part of their community outreach and public extension programs, company personnel regularly attend a variety of functions and deliver programs to promote public awareness of forestry, forest management and company operations. The Companies are committed to an ongoing program of public awareness in the region and will include information on the development and current status of the LSLRFMP where possible. Public awareness activities include:

- Lesser Slave Lake Education Society (LSFES). A non-profit organization that was created in 2001 by the forest companies in the Slave Lake area with the assistance of the government. Its mandate is “forest focused environmental education” for children and the general public in the Slave Lake region. The Companies support the LSFES financially, administratively and through active participation. A number of public involvement efforts are coordinated through this society, including National Forest Week, school field trips and tours and youth projects centred on environmental learning.
- National Forest Week. This event provides the opportunity to actively seek public input into forest management activities in the region. The Companies, the GoA and educational institutions conduct a number of field tours, mill tours, information open houses and radio and newspaper articles to further the general understanding of forestry practices.
- Newspaper and Radio. The Companies actively use local media to make announcements relating to forest planning and operations on their FMAs. Regular announcements are made, and will continue to be made, regarding upcoming open houses or other public participation opportunities in specific areas.
- Mill Tours. The Companies have arranged and conducted tours of their facilities for interested parties.
- Career Fairs. The Companies support and participate in local career fairs. This has included programs at local high schools and the broader community.
- Company Information. Information on the Companies is available on company web pages and in stewardship and financial reports.

4.5.5 Website

The companies will build a website specifically for the development of the LSLRFMP. This website will act as virtual open house providing the public access to background information, key consultation materials and details regarding upcoming opportunities to participate in plan development. The website will include a “Contact” form allowing members of the public to provide feedback or ask specific questions relating to LSLRFMP development. Rollout of the website is anticipated in the spring of 2017.

4.6 Issue Identification and Resolution

All issues and concerns raised during the public consultation process will be recorded and the Companies will work with the stakeholders to address and attempt to resolve the issues in a timely and informal manner. Issues that cannot be resolved in this way will be taken to the PDT for direction and a further attempt will be made to resolve the issue informally. In the event that no resolution is achieved, the dispute resolution mechanism outlined in section 14 of the Terms of Reference will be followed. This will be considered a last resort; the Companies will make every attempt to resolve all issues prior to invoking the dispute resolution mechanism.

4.7 Monitoring

The implementation and effectiveness of the public involvement and consultation process will be monitored by the PDT and public advisory committees. The process will be adapted as necessary to ensure its ongoing efficacy at meeting the stated objectives of this plan.

No formal communication monitoring processes or metrics have been developed for the LSLRFMP. Input and feedback on the plan will be documented, classified and summarized which will provide some measure of the communication efforts and potentially communication success. May be possible to track and summarize the number of hits on the LSLRFMP website and report the relationship to LSLRFMP communication initiatives such as open houses.

5 Documentation

Documentation is an important component of the LSLRFMP and includes descriptions of the communication efforts and outcomes. Internal and external communication will be documented as development of the plan progresses and will be summarized in the LSLRFMP. The Companies recognize the importance of and support the protection of personal information. Processes for recording, documenting and presenting personal information and input into the LSLRFMP will follow all applicable laws and regulations. Documentation will include:

- Summary lists of stakeholders and interested parties;
- Summary of the communication initiatives undertaken; and
- Summary of the issues identified (both internal and external) and how they were addressed in the development of the LSLRFM.

To address the complexity of the LSLRFMP, including three FMA holders and five FMU's, the Companies will develop centralized communication processes, procedures and documentation. This will include the creation of standardized communication products and documentation templates. Communication information and documentation will be accessible by the Companies for updates and centrally assembled and managed.