

C5 Logging-Recommendations for the Oldman Headwaters

-Immediate moratorium on logging in C5 pending a review of logging practices and impacts on water, threatened fish and wildlife, recreation and other forest values, and the development of a new C5 plan.

-Undertake an independent economic analysis of logging in C5 to determine costs and benefits for Alberta and the Oldman watershed.

-Develop and undertake watershed risk and health assessment modelling and tools that incorporate watershed integrity, biodiversity and water supply (quantity and quality) indicators and thresholds.

-Undertake a comprehensive cumulative effects analysis of C5 as background for planning to understand current footprint of use and future projections.

-Undertake a comprehensive linear density/disturbance inventory of C5 as background for planning recreational access, threatened/valued species maintenance and recovery, needs for watershed protection, needs for parks and protected areas, restoration to meet key thresholds and landscape integrity maintenance.

-Independent, multi-stakeholder rewrite of the C5 plan to transform it from a timber/fiber management plan to a forest/watershed management plan. Ensure new planning incorporates with Linear Footprint, Recreation, Cumulative Effects Analysis and Biodiversity Management Framework elements of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan. Ensure the new C5 plan will meet Forest Stewardship Certification and operations within C5 become the “gold standard” for provincial management.

-Reassert watershed protection as the priority for C5 and ensure all other land uses are subservient. Create policies and legislation that prioritize watershed protection in resource management decisions.

-Incorporate ecosystem protection into future logging practices with a landscape approach to timber harvest that includes diverse protected areas at large and small scales. Ensure watershed integrity and ecological health have higher priorities than timber harvest.

- Move from large scale, sustained yield, industrial logging practices to sustainable forestry and community-based forms of forestry operations. End the practice of using annual allowable cut as a quota to be met for commercial logging.**
- Incorporate fire into ecosystem planning to create a diverse landscape/vegetative mosaic more resistant to fire, that reduces fire suppression costs and better protects life and property.**
- Adhere immediately to Westslope cutthroat trout recovery strategy, bull trout management plan, grizzly bear recovery plan and habitat protection guidelines for other valued species to meet legislated and policy commitments. Ensure upgraded stream classifications (Class “A” designations) under the Water Act for threatened fish species are completed immediately.**
- Immediately develop and apply fish and wildlife species specific Operational Ground Rules (especially for threatened species) that designate significant buffer widths, stream crossing restrictions, slope restrictions, timing constraints, restoration requirements, cumulative effects and linear density thresholds adherences. Ensure there are no deviations permitted.**
- Ensure fisheries and wildlife/biodiversity protection guidelines are fully integrated at all levels of forest/timber planning- Operational Ground Rules, Detailed Forest Management Plans, General Development Plans, Final Harvest Plans and Annual Operating Plans.**
- Undertake an independent review/revision of existing timber harvest operating ground rules to incorporate empirical research into the formation of guidelines that better protect non-timber forest values. Ensure there are no deviations from the ground rules allowed with strict policies on non-conformance.**
- Provide resources (staff and funding) to enable fish and wildlife operations to collect essential data on populations and habitat for input and analysis for restoration/recovery efforts (including legislative responsibilities), cumulative effects modelling, linear disturbance assessment, recreation planning and forest/timber management planning.**

- Develop a restoration plan for existing linear disturbance that will, in reasonable time reduce linear density to thresholds recommended for water quality and quantity, threatened species maintenance and watershed integrity targets. Address linear density (and motorized recreational use) with a rationalization of the road and trail network that recognizes key thresholds for watershed integrity. Amend legislation that permits maintenance of “historical” access to conform to new access management planning.**
- Map key, critical and reference watersheds for water quality, water quantity, threatened species and ecological reference areas.**
- Implement protective/restoration mechanisms for key, critical and reference watersheds. Consider applying Environmental Assessments for any proposed industrial, logging or motorized/intensive recreational activity.**
- Create independent/arm’s length review mechanisms/processes that separate timber planning/allocation from compliance/enforcement efforts to ensure better oversight. Ensure adequate staff, resources and training are in place to assess and enforce compliance as well as monitor effects of various land uses.**
- More inclusive public participation in timber harvest planning, at reasonable time periods and locations so input, recommendations and concerns can be addressed. Ensure better access to timber harvest plans via the departmental website and transparency in operational matters and monitoring results.**
- Review the Forest Act to amend legislation to enable different, progressive timber management and protection of non-timber values in the Eastern Slopes.**
- As part of amendments to Forest Act and other legislation ensure a shared and equal responsibility exists between departments on management of timber harvest, other industrial land uses, recreational uses and protection of non-timber values.**

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