

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Post Mill Lumber, a subsidiary company of the Labrador Inuit Development Corporation (LIDC), proposes to initiate a saw log harvesting operation within a portion of Forest Management District 23. To advance this objective, the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA) embarked on the development of the first ever Five Year Operating Plan for the District. To assist in the preparation of the plan, LIA engaged the services of AMEC Earth and Environmental Limited (AMEC). The result was this planning document.

Currently, much of the land base covered by this plan is the subject of land claims negotiations between LIA and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. At this point, the land is still considered to be Crown land and under the jurisdiction of the Department of Forest Resources and Agrifoods (DFRA). Consequently, although the plan was developed by LIA, with the assistance of AMEC, the proponent is DFRA. In this capacity, DFRA assumes responsibility for shepherding the plan through the environmental assessment process. Should the status of all or portion of the affected land base change during the period covered by the plan, responsibility for the plan may pass from the DFRA to another entity.

Additionally, it should be made clear that this plan covers only a portion of District 23, specifically a contiguous block centered on the community of Postville and the Kaipokok River (see Figure 2.4). This plan area (hereafter referred to as the Postville Harvest Area), though it represents only 8% of the District land base, encompasses the majority of the merchantable forest in the District.

The community of Postville is situated in the District on Kaipokok Bay and has considerable forest resources that have yet to be utilized to their full potential. Other communities along the coast of Labrador have prospered due, in part, to their natural resources. Postville has the opportunity to develop a long-term sawmill business that could employ up to 20 individuals. As only 250 people live within the community, this represents a significant boost to the local economy.

This Five Year Operating Plan is not typical with respect to the information requirements outlined in the Guidelines for Five Year Operating Plans (DFRA 1995). Due to the lack of an Ecosystem Strategy Document (i.e. Forest Ecosystem Management Plan), these guidelines were also incorporated so that this document can adequately address the resource and socio-economic concerns of the local community. Much of the process for Adaptive Forest Ecosystem Management implemented here has been adapted from the province's Twenty-Year Forestry Development Plan (1996-2015) (DFRA 1995a) and the Environmental Preview Report for FMD 20, Labrador (Moore 1995) on the Adaptive Management Process.

This Five Year Operating Plan also differs from many other plans for other districts in the province in several ways. Firstly, the sustainable Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) is typically calculated by DFRA. In this instance, the forest inventory data used to calculate the AAC was updated by AMEC and an AAC was calculated as part of the Five Year Operating Plan. Secondly, this Five Year Operating Plan incorporates the community's resource values as one

of the primary sources of input in determining an acceptable level of harvest for the proposed operation. The planning process took the view of “Community First”.

A traditional Five Year Operating Plan would typically be prepared on reactive approaches to stakeholder participation, which can be ineffective and costly. Alternate approaches to management are available which integrate environmental with economic and social understanding at the beginning of the planning process. Adaptive management is such a process. It provides a co-operative/proactive framework for managing natural resources. The adaptive process maximizes the managers’ understanding about the system, and is consequently a cautious approach to initiating management in complex systems.

The Labrador Inuit Association (LIA), LIDC and Post Mill Lumber have been working collaboratively on a multi-stakeholder planning process in accordance with the provincial Adaptive Forest Ecosystem Management Planning Strategy (DFRA 1995) since July 2001. This process has several key elements:

- strives to have efficient and effective stakeholder participation;
- an ecosystem approach to forest management that integrates economic, social and ecological knowledge to develop sustainable forest management strategies;
- continuous learning about forest ecosystems while they are being actively managed; and
- an approach that includes a consensus based decision making process.

The planning process involved a series of intensive workshops and public meetings with members of the Town of Postville, LIA, LIDC, and Post Mill Lumber to identify and discuss important personal, community, cultural, and spiritual values of the local forest so that these values could be incorporated into the Five Year Operating Plan in a true consultative and adaptive process. The community of Postville does not want unlimited clear cutting in the forested areas delineated for this Five Year Operating Plan. They have agreed that with protected “no commercial harvest zones” and the use of variable retention and the other non-clear cut techniques within the designated harvest areas, there is an acceptable compromise between the benefits of the harvesting operation and the loss of mature/over-mature forested areas.