

Forestry

Background

Most of the area within the NWAP plan boundary has little timber value. Timbered lands are located primarily along river valleys in the upper Kobuk River area and the southeastern portion of Seward Peninsula. Most harvested wood comes from land owned by Native corporations. Most state land is located some distance from Native villages and is only used as a source of timber when there is a demand for higher quality timber, such as house logs.

Given the fairly dispersed nature of state timber resources, their remoteness, and their distance to any market, there are no planned timber sales in the planning area. The Division of Forestry (DOF) is responsible for the implementation of the Forest Practices Act on any harvest on private lands including Native corporations. Very little commercial harvest has occurred in the area and little is expected in the future.

Forested lands will continue to be available for public use. Harvesting may take place on any land use designation within the planning area if it is compatible with the primary designated use.

Goals

Personal Use Timber. Provide timber to meet the needs of Alaskans. This program will be limited in scope and provided on a demand basis when the operational costs of administering this program are satisfactory.

Economic Opportunities. Provide for economic opportunities and stability in the forest products industry by allowing the use of state tidelands and submerged lands for log storage and transfer sites, and beach log salvage.

Support Timber Industry. Perform reviews of private timber harvest should they occur for adherence to the Forest Practices Act. Provide information and technical expertise in the management of forest resources if and when it may be needed by the industry.

Wildland Fire Suppression. DOF shall continue to provide wildland fire suppression within the planning area consistent with the requirements of the Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan.

Management Guidelines

A systematic program of scheduled timber harvests is not appropriate within the planning area at the present time; however, a few sales may be possible on an opportunistic basis. Should this occur they are likely to be small, isolated sales associated with the development of a subdivision, disposal of state land, or some other form of intensive land use. Harvest for personal use or salvage from disease or other destructive agents is likely at some time during the planning period. Timber management activities are subject to the following management guidelines in addition to the requirements of the state Forest Practices Act and any Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP) for a specific area.

The central focus of the state forestry program within the planning area is fire management. A management guideline is included that describes the broad aspects of this program. The implementation of the state fire management program is identified and controlled in detail by the Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan.

A. Timber Harvest Guidelines

1. All timber harvest activities must be compatible with the management guidelines of this section and with the management intent statements and land use designations identified in specific management units of this plan found in Chapter 3. Most of the management units of state land are designated Habitat, General Use, Minerals, Minerals/Habitat, Transportation Corridor, Public Recreation-Dispersed, or Settlement. Forest harvest/management may be an appropriate use within any of these designations, consistent with the management intent and management guidelines of specific management units. Forest harvest operations conducted on a management unit of state land⁶ intended for subdivision development by DNR can precede actual construction. However, these operations must be consistent with the subdivision plan for the management unit. Consultation with DMLW is required before commencing operations.
2. All timber harvest operations will be conducted in accordance with the stipulations in the Forest Land Use Plan, the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (AS 41.17 & 11 AAC 95), the Alaska Land Act (AS 38.05 & 11 AAC 71), and other pertinent state guidelines and laws. The Forest Practices Act provides statewide guidance and policy for managing forestry related activities. The specific layout and other site-specific requirements of a timber sale are addressed through a FLUP, which is prepared prior to any commercial timber harvest or sale (AS 38.05.112).

FLUPs developed for timber sale or harvests in the planning area are to be consistent with the Forestry Management Guidelines of this Chapter and the Management Guidelines specified for particular management units in Chapter 3. FLUPs shall consider sensitive resources, wildlife, or any other significant factors identified in the Management Guidelines for a management unit.

⁶ Because of the scarcity of forest resource within the planning area, this requirement only applies to a few possible subdivision areas.

3. Land conveyed out of state ownership for the purpose of settlement, or another form of active land use, shall not be used for commercial timber harvest and sale. Such disposals of state land by DNR shall preclude the sale of merchantable timber harvested on lots or management units conveyed out of state ownership. The format used to impose this restriction is at the discretion of the Regional Manager, Southcentral Office. This guideline is not intended to preclude the cutting of trees or other vegetation as part of the process of land clearing or site development.

B. Beach Log Salvage. Although beach log salvage may be categorically consistent with the Alaska Coastal Management Program, a license is required from the Department before salvage commences. Beach log salvage administered under the provisions of AS 45.50 and 11 AAC 71 shall be consistent with standards developed by the DOF and GC-10 (General Permit) of the ACMP.

C. Timber Salvage from Rights-of-Way. Timber with commercial or personal use value should be salvaged from lands that are to be cleared for other uses such as roads, transmission lines, material sites, mining, and habitat enhancement projects (AS 41.17.083). The Regional Manager of the Southcentral Region of DMLW shall determine the amount and kind of material that is to be salvaged.

D. Personal Use Wood Harvest. When forested lands are available near communities and where personal use harvest is consistent with other purposes for which the land is being managed, DOF may consider providing wood products for personal use. This program will only be undertaken, however, if it can be effectively and efficiently administered by DOF. Only limited use of this program is expected given the relatively low demand for personal use wood, the absence of a good supply, the high administrative costs of a small personal use wood supply program, and the difficulty of managing such a program from a distance.

E. Sustained Yield of Forest Resources. Forestland will be managed to guarantee perpetual supplies of renewable resources to serve the needs of all Alaskans for the many products, benefits, and services obtained from them. The annual allowable harvest will be calculated using the area control method.

F. Salvage of Damaged Trees. Trees damaged due to wind throw, insect, or disease conditions may be salvaged on all land use designations unless management intent statements for specific management units in Chapter 3 specifically prohibit salvage harvest. A FLUP, if required, will provide the rationale for conducting the salvage harvest and describe how the action will not conflict with the management intent for each management unit.

G. Fire Disturbance. The intent of fire management is to identify where wildland fire can be allowed or management ignited fires can be used to reduce costs of fire suppression, reduce the risk of damaging fires, and maintain the natural diversity and productivity of forest stands. Fire suppression will be a priority near residential areas or other forms of active land use, high value recreation use areas, and areas with infrastructure development. Consistent with AS 41.15.010 and AS 41.15.020, DOF will protect forest resources from destructive agents commensurate

with the values needing protection. However, where feasible, wildland fires will be allowed to burn and suppression will be limited to decrease the long-term risk of damaging fires and to maintain the natural diversity of forest stands, stand ages, and habitat types. Where allowing wildland fire is not feasible, timber harvest, management ignited fires, and habitat enhancement techniques will be used to disturb the forest and maintain a natural range of forest types and stand ages. Specific fire suppression levels are identified in the Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan.

H. Other Guidelines Affecting Forestry. Other guidelines will affect management practices for timber development support facilities and forestry. See other sections of this chapter.