

Background information on February 27-28th workshop: Forest Representation Targets for the Central and North Coast of BC

Context: existing agreements

The Central and North Coast LRMPs as well as recent agreements between coastal First Nations and the Province of BC have committed to implement Ecosystem-Based Management in full by March 31st, 2009. "Full EBM" as agreed to by all parties is to be guided by the Ecosystem-Based Management Planning Handbook (EBMPH) developed by the Coast Information Team (CIT). The CIT became operational in January 2002, and completed its work in March 2004. It "brought together the best available scientific, traditional, and local knowledge to develop independent information and analyses in support of ecosystem-based management (EBM) in the north and central coastal region of British Columbia, including Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte Islands" (CIT website). The EBM Planning Handbook was designed to "guide implementation of EBM across multiple scales—from First Nations territories or other planning subregions such as the Central and North Coast, through landscapes and watersheds, to individual sites" (CIT website).

A document called the "Scientific Basis of Ecosystem-based Management" describes the ecological basis of the management targets recommended in the CIT's EBM Planning Handbook. The Scientific Basis of EBM can be downloaded at <http://www.citbc.org/c-ebm-scibas-fin-04May04.pdf>.

The EBMPH uses old forest representation targets as a coarse filter biodiversity strategy:

The EBM Handbook gives different guidelines for different scales:

- By sub-region, maintain minimum 70% of the natural old seral distribution in each site series¹⁴ by sub-region
- By landscape, maintain minimum 50% of the natural old seral distribution in each site series; maintain >70% average distribution across landscapes
- By watershed, maintain minimum 30% of the natural old seral distribution in each site series; the average across watersheds = landscape target
- By site, maintain 15–70% retention, depending on watershed risk targets (see Compendium Section 4, In-block retention)
- Maintain less than 50% of each site series in mid seral condition (watershed and landscape scale)

The EBM Handbook also gives guidance about landscape pattern:

- protect critical habitat and maintain connectivity for red/blue listed and focal wildlife species

¹⁴ These percents may be applied to appropriate site series groups rather than to each site series

The scientific basis for these recommendations is outlined in Section 4.1, pp. 62-69, of the Scientific Basis of EBM.

In addition, the LRMP agreements included a provision to “refine” these representation targets by:

- (i) grouping ecosystems according to specified ecological criteria (e.g. the habitat value of individual ecosystems, connectivity value of the ecosystems, sensitivity of ecosystem function to reductions in old seral stage conditions, the portion of ecosystem reserved in protected areas, relative frequency/rarity of ecosystems, and the potential ecological impacts of excess levels of mid and early seral habitats)
- (ii) developing group specific risk curves and thresholds
- (iii) establishing a range of precautionary targets for each ecosystem grouping based on the ecological criteria as well as the estimated reliability of data (where surrogates are used) and
- (iv) specifying spatial deployment strategies. (CCLRMP)

Work to date

To address this question of “threshold refinement”, a group of BC ecologists (Rachel Holt, Laurie Kremsater, and Karen Price) have been developing a paper summarizing the most current scientific information on habitat supply thresholds and other research relevant to the LRMP direction. The paper will be distributed prior to the workshop (by February 5th); the current table of contents is included in Appendix I. This paper will form a basis for discussions at the workshop.

Workshop objectives

The goal of this workshop is to make recommendations about how best to implement old forest representation on the North and Central Coast. The background paper will focus the workshop discussion. The outcome of the workshop will be recommendations for implementing old forest representation effectively under a system of Ecosystem-Based Management and recommendations for refining the old forest representation targets in the EBM handbook. **Thus this workshop will play a critical role in shaping EBM on the North and Central Coasts, through 2009 and beyond.**

Workshop structure

Day one will use the draft discussion paper and a panel presentation by the paper authors and workshop participants as the basis for a dialogue between participants on a few key ecological questions, in order to provide recommendations on the representation targets and their application.

Day two will be a technical workshop using a GIS and maps to experiment with different representation scenarios and questions, to examine some of the practical aspects regarding implementation.

Prior to the workshop, and following the release of the paper on February 5th, there will be a conference call with scientific panel members to address broad feedback on the

paper and to develop a detailed agenda with the intention of making the workshop as effective as possible for practitioners.

Current old forest representation implementation status

A first suite of EBM legal objectives is being developed by the Province based on the recent Government-to-Government agreements. Currently out for public review, <http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/ilmb/lup/index.html#new>. These legal objectives will apply a 30% of natural old forest target to ecosystems covering roughly 97% of the landbase, with a 70% target applying to remaining ecosystems. It will also cap the amount of mid-seral in any landscape unit at 50% by ecosystem.

Although there is agreement to implement full EBM guided by the EBM handbook by 2009, draft legal objectives and current voluntary implementation do not yet reflect the management targets in the EBM handbook. In addition, due to a lack of coast-wide mapping of site series (which are the appropriate ecosystem representation unit), old forest representation has been approached using site series surrogates, a combination of BEC subzone/variant, site index (productivity), and leading tree species.

Appendix I: Discussion Paper Table of Contents

Representative Forest Targets: Informing Threshold Refinement with Science

Draft November, 2006

Table of Contents

Background	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1. Introduction	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.1. Habitat Loss Drives Species Declines and Losses.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.2. Links between species and ecosystems.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.3. Species Loss can Affect Community and Ecosystem Function	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2. Analysis of Relevant Science	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.1. Introduction.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.2. Methods.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.3. Results	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.4. Discussion	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.4.1. What the research tells us	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.4.2. Complexities in Interpreting Threshold Analysis	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.4.3. statistical power	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.4.4. time lags and extinction debt	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.4.5. limitations of occurrence data	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3. How has science been applied to the coast?	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.1. The original CIT approach to sustaining ecological integrity.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.1.1. Targets “as a percent of natural”.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.1.2. How has the original CIT approach been modified to date?	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.1.3. Risk level associated with interim scenario.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4. An updated revision, using the updated science: recommendations Error! Bookmark not defined.	
4.1. Using risk and uncertainty to determine appropriate representation levels ...	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.2. What is ‘habitat’ on the coast?	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.3. BC coastal habitat condition today	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.4. Natural disturbance rate and pattern	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Recovery of ecosystems	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.4.2. Allocation of reserves – landscape versus stand.	Error! Bookmark not defined.
A precautionary approach based on risk and uncertainty.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

4.6.1. Do natural disturbances change how targets should be set? **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

- 5. **Recommendations**..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 5.1. refining thresholds for different ecosystems—potential considerations **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 5.1.1. Sensitivity to Decrease in Old Seral..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 5.1.2. Sensitivity to Excess Mid and Early Seral **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 5.1.3. Habitat Value **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 5.1.4. ecosystem type (hydroriparian; productivity; site series/AU) **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 5.1.5. Frequency/rarity **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 5.1.6. Connectivity Value **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 5.1.7. Proportion of Ecosystem in Protected Areas **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 5.1.8. Conclusions **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- 6. **applying stand/landscape trade-offs** **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 6.1.1. Stand Level Retention – roles in the landscape..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 6.1.2. Counting stand level retention **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 6.2. achieving targets while natural disturbance continues..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 6.3. alternatives for achieving representation: example landscapes..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
 - 6.4. reducing the uncertainty: adaptive management and monitoring ... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- 7. **References** **Error! Bookmark not defined.**