



**Manitoba's Submission Guidelines for
Forest Management Operating Plans**

Manitoba Conservation

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June 2011

First Published: 2011

Valid Until: 2013 (2 years from date of initial approval)

Developed by Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship

The following organizations are acknowledged for their contributions:

Tembec Industries Inc.

Tolko Industries Ltd.

LP Canada Ltd.

Spruce Products Ltd.

The public is encouraged to send any comments and/or recommendations to forestguidelines@gov.mb.ca

Foreword

Submission guidelines for Forest Management Operating Plans (OP) were developed in 2010, to replace the Planning and Submission Guidelines for Annual Operating Plans (1996). The updated guidelines will ensure the submitted OP is consistent with provincial policy, practices and standards for forest management.

Forest Management Operating Plans are submitted by the proponent to Manitoba Conservation. The OP is reviewed in the department by appropriate branches and regional Integrated Resource Management Teams. The approval of a Forest Management Operating Plan is the responsibility of the Director, Forestry Branch, Manitoba Conservation.

This guidebook is written to help proponents obtain an approved OP. The proponent has the discretion to assemble the OP in a form they prefer as long as it includes the required information. The tables presented in the guidelines are not standards but are examples of the information required in the OP.

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Introduction

The planning elements of the operating plan (OP) describe all the elements from initiation to completion of the proposed forest management activity that will be undertaken in the planning period. The planning elements include the:

- collection of information
- verification of information
- development and summary of harvest blocks,
- planning of renewal activities
- writing the OP
- mitigation with the regional Integrated Resource Management Team (IRMT)
- conducting information sharing meetings

This guideline replaces the 1996 guideline *Planning and Submission Requirements for Annual Operating Plans*. The guideline has been updated to accommodate the responsibility of the Manitoba government to conduct Crown-Aboriginal consultation pertaining to forestry operations and to continue to provide the proponent with operation continuity. Guidelines for conducting Crown-Aboriginal consultation can be found at: http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/pdf/interim_aboriginal_consultation_policy_and_guidelines.pdf

The OP is the main vehicle for the forest management plan (FMP) implementation. The harvest blocks in the OP must be within the perimeter of the operating areas found in the approved (20 year) FMP. Harvest and renewal techniques used in the OP are described in the FMP. When outside variables dictated or occurred due to situations that cannot be planned for (ex: forest fire, insect and disease outbreaks etc.) during the implementation of a 20 year plan, and when there are new techniques being employed during the current OP, the proponent will describe how these new techniques are being used. Over the course of the 20 year plan when new techniques are developed, (ex: harvest or silviculture operations) the proponent will describe these new techniques in the OP.

OPs are prepared and submitted to describe where, and in some cases which season, the proponent requests to develop roads, harvest timber and renew the forest. The final product also may include the integration of operations with other resource users, the mitigation of the impacts of logging, the reclamation of disturbed sites and the renewal of harvested areas.

This guideline has been developed to provide direction for the preparation of the OP for forest management operations on Crown land in Manitoba. The guideline outlines the processes, responsibilities and level of detail necessary to ensure a complete and comprehensive planning document. As long as the required information is contained within, the proponent has the discretion to assemble the OP in a form they prefer. The tables included in the guidelines are not standards. They are examples of how the information required in the OP may be presented.

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This guidebook outlines the minimum information required of the proponent. It is recognized that some proponents may currently be providing additional information beyond these requirements.

Various guidelines pertaining to forest management activities within the province of Manitoba are used to develop the OP.

The list of current guidelines can be found on Manitoba's website:

www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/forestry/practices/guidelines.html

During mitigation, the IRMT and the proponent will discuss the term of the OP. The approval term for an OP may be one or two years. A two-year term may be considered based on the status of mitigated pre-harvest survey (PHS) block scheduling. The IRMT may consider a two year OP without all blocks mitigated at the time of OP approval. However, subsequent mitigation of these areas may trigger an amendment and these amendments may require Crown-Aboriginal consultation. The proponent must be mindful that OP amendment approval may take up to three months. There is a limit of 15 amendments per year requiring Director of Forestry Branch approval.

The regional IRMT leads the OP review process within Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship. Regional recommendations for approval or non-approval of the OP are forwarded to the Director of Forestry Branch.

The OP must be approved in writing, by the Director of Forestry, in whole or in part before any operations may be started.

If treaty or Aboriginal rights are asserted after the approval of the OP, the Director of Forestry Branch may require amendments to the OP to accommodate or mitigate a potential impact or infringement.

Purpose

The purpose of the OP guideline is to clearly state Manitoba's requirements of the proponent. The OP provides:

- a description of tactical forestry operations which reflects the objectives, goals and targets of the FMP
- block specific details (develops prescriptions)
- detail about the decision-making process
- a description of planning processes and timelines about forest management planning

Objectives

The objectives of the OP are to give a format to the proponent to:

- explain any operational changes from what was described in the FMP
- define the perimeter of the area where operations may be performed – for example harvest, planting, seeding, tending (an exception would be for initial renewal operations which may occur in harvest blocks shown)
- develop access management prescriptions
- show where the specific location of activities may occur – for example right-of-way clearing, road building, water crossing construction
- track and report any changes to the annual allowable cut (AAC)
- display future harvest projections

Plan Development

Preliminary Planning Phase

Communications between a proponent and IRMT during the preparation of an OP are referred to as mitigation. Once the proponent has completed pre-harvest surveys and has developed a preliminary block shape the mitigation may begin. Proposed cut-blocks will not be considered for review and subsequent approval until pre-harvest survey information has been collected. Some exceptions may apply in situations such as forest fires, insect infestations, wind storms, commercial salvage permits, own use timber permits etc.

For previously mitigated cut blocks the proponent will bring to the mitigation process the previous notes and mitigated cut blocks shapes. The proponent or MC may request changes to the cut block shape due to new information, new direction etc.

The proponent will submit to the regional IRMT for joint review, within four months of the approval date, (ex: plan due date June 1, hand in draft February 1) a draft OP. The presentation of a draft proposal should be consistent with the OP format described in the following pages. The intent of the planning phase is to reach agreement between the proponent and Manitoba prior to the submission of the OP.

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Mitigation of resource concerns will be incorporated into the OP during its preparation and not deferred to the operating permit/work permit stage. Any mitigation performed after the OP is approved should work within the perimeter of the approved harvest block to avoid an OP amendment. Plan amendments may trigger further Crown-Aboriginal consultation requirements.

Harvest projections will be displayed in the OP. Up to three years of projected harvest are displayed on both the key and detailed maps with the proposed main access and the proposed perimeter of the cut-block. If available, the projections can be sub-divided into years.

Aerial and Ground Herbicide

The OP will include all herbicide treatment. Site viewing will fine tune the area within the shape displayed in the OP.

Mitigation Timelines

Table 1 **Timeline for Operating Plan Submission**

DATE	DELIVERABLE	ACTIVITY
May 15 to November	Summary of the PHS information (prior to mitigation) (Proponent)	Pre-harvest surveys are being completed
August to November – any time after the PHS is complete	Harvest area with prescriptions for riparian and terrestrial values (Proponent)	The proponent and the IRMT meet to discuss the harvest block shape and the associated values and determine a reasonable prescription and final block shape.
January	Information sharing (Proponent)	Open Houses
Start in January	Consultation (Crown)	Initial preparation for Crown-Aboriginal consultation
February	Revised draft OP (Proponent)	As a result of comments and/or concerns made at open houses, the proponent may or may not revise proposed harvest prescriptions within the final draft OP.
End of February	Final draft OP due (Proponent)	Collate all of the text and appendices and send one copy to the region and one copy to headquarters.
March	Verification (Crown)	Review the final draft OP
End of March to end of April	The required number of copies of the OP (Proponent)	Start making the required number of copies of the OP
May	Draft conditions of approval (Crown)	Draft the text and email to the proponent, Conservation and Water Stewardship
End of May	Conditions of approval of OP (Crown)	1. Changes to text, tables and maps in the OP as a result of the Crown-Aboriginal consultation will be done through a covering letter approving the OP by the Director of Forestry. 2. Other changes to text, tables and maps in the OP will be done through a covering letter approving the OP by the Director of Forestry.
June 1 st	Approval letter of OP signed by the Director of Forestry (Crown)	Approval of OP

Submission Schedule

1. Once the proponent has developed a set of preliminary block shapes with corresponding pre-harvest survey information, the mitigation process may begin.
2. Projection blocks unlikely to be approved, because of known concerns by Manitoba, will be identified to the proponent before or during mitigation. This information will improve use of the pre-harvest surveys.
3. By end of February the final draft OP will be submitted.

Recommended Timelines for Crown-Aboriginal Consultation

- Crown-Aboriginal consultation can start with the delivery of the final draft OP
- Crown-Aboriginal consultation should be complete by May 15th

When the operating plan requirements, as per this guideline, are met the letter of approval from the Director of Forestry will be signed.

Information Sharing

Open Houses

The proponent will schedule meetings with communities in and around the licence area. Each proponent will adopt a workable method for information sharing with the objective of answering the community's questions and incorporating new values into the OP. A regional representative may accompany the proponent at open houses to answer questions addressed to Manitoba and for Manitoba's perspectives. In an appendix of the OP, the proponent will provide copies of the invitations, including the meeting location and time, the number of people attending the meeting and the meeting minutes. New values shared by the community that affect the draft OP will be placed in the meeting minutes. Changes to the draft OP due to these new values will be highlighted in the appropriate section of the OP.

At the information sharing meeting (open house) the following information should be readily available:

- the previous OP
- the two previous annual reports
- a paper copy of the draft OP and all associated maps that are being shared
- Forestry Road Development Plans (FRDP), for all existing and proposed roads
- standard operating guidelines
- a copy of the FMP

Operating Plan Approval by Manitoba Conservation

The operating plan is submitted to Manitoba for review and approval. The IRMT will review the plan contents from a regional perspective. The regional review may involve information sharing with various stakeholder groups and will provide opportunities for Crown-Aboriginal consultation. The regional review will concentrate on operational concerns. Regional comments are then forwarded to the regional Director and the Director of Forestry Branch. The plan receives written approval from the Director of Forestry, including additional comments and approval conditions.

A review by Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship headquarters will include verification that:

- the AAC referred to in a table in the text of the OP is the correct number
- all silviculture projects are included
- all components of the OP have been submitted, including new FRDPs for existing and proposed roads
- the mapping portions of the OP have been submitted and are acceptable

Amendments to the Operating Plan

Amendments to the OP may require Crown-Aboriginal consultation. Approved amendments are considered as an addendum to the submitted OP. Operations are then carried out in accordance with the conditions of approval of the OP.

In normal situations amendments (see appendix 1- Forestry Branch Circular C-5 – *Forest Operation Amendments to Approved Forest Management Licensee's Annual Operating Plans*) to add harvest blocks, roads, or renewal blocks during the term of the OP will be considered. Crown-Aboriginal consultation may be required and may take up to three months. The circular will be used as the framework for the amendment process and to assess risk. Any other concerns related to the plan will be included in an addendum.

Field Operations

Manitoba Conservation staff responsible for timber supervision and enforcement has the authority to modify conditions of approval or planned events, provided that these changes comply with Forestry Branch Circular C-5 – *Forest Operation Amendments to Approved Forest Management Licensee's Annual Operating Plans*. For example, this approval authority might include a minor change in road location or cut-block boundary to avoid wet operating conditions. Refer to Forestry Branch Circular C-5 for more information.

Requirements

The following information is required for operations and will form the basis on which the plan is approved.

1. Pre-Harvest Survey

A summary of the pre-harvest survey information will be found in the OP.

2. Map Requirements

A. Harvest

Maps at two different scales, with the same legends are required for an OP. These maps may show similar information but their presentation will be different due to their scale.

Key Map (approximately 1:250,000 in pdf, jpeg or comparable format)

The key map contains whole or part of the FML and the forest management unit including:

- proposed, projected, and roll over blocks
- existing primary and secondary roads,
- proposed roads, proposed road decommissioning, and access control *
- water features
- communities
- First Nation lands

On all key maps land values such as parks, wildlife management areas, areas of special interest, Treaty Land Entitlements, Northern Affairs community boundaries, protected areas, designated Crown lands and Northern Flood Agreement perimeters will be identified.

Detailed Maps and/or photos (approximately 1:15,840 to 1:125,000 in pdf, jpeg or comparable format)

- location and boundary of the proposed and projected cut-block
- detailed maps with the following information: road location, name and existing access control * of roads
- location of existing cutovers and roads (the map will detail the activity carried out over the last three years)
- location of water crossings
- unmerchantable and inoperable areas (within cut-blocks), permanent sample plots
- land values such as parks, areas of special interest, protected areas, designated Crown lands, Treaty Land Entitlements and Northern Flood Agreement perimeters will be identified

* access control/water crossing structure type to be shown on the most appropriate map and may be shown with a symbol or colour coding

B. Renewal

A key map (approximately 1:100,000 to 1:400,000 in pdf, jpeg or comparable format) is required, showing the following attributes:

- proposed plant, seeding, site preparation, scarification areas
- proposed aerial and ground tending areas
- proposed natural regeneration areas

Contents of OP Appendix

Forestry Road Development Plans

New forestry road development plans will be added to the appendix of the OP.

Information Sharing Meetings

In the appendix of the OP, the proponent will provide copies of the invitations, including the meeting location and time, the number of people attending the information sharing meeting and the meeting minutes.

Glossary of Terms

Crown-Aboriginal Consultation

The Government of Manitoba recognizes it has a duty to consult in a meaningful way with First Nations and Aboriginal communities when a proposed provincial law, regulation, decision or action may infringe upon or adversely affect the exercise of a treaty or Aboriginal right of the Aboriginal community.

Consultation is a process of two-way communication in which advice and opinions of the consulted party are sought prior to government action for the purposes of ensuring that both parties are better informed. For more information on Crown-Aboriginal

Consultation see the *Interim Provincial Policy for Crown Consultations with First Nations, Métis Communities and Other Aboriginal Communities* at:

http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/pdf/interim_aboriginal_consultation_policy_and_guidelines.pdf

Forestry Road Development Plans (FRDP) – consist of maps, tables and text that describe the planning for all the existing and proposed roads including road retirement and decommissioning within distinct geographic areas within a Forest Management Licence (FML). Significant amendments (as identified by the IRMT) to FRDP will be appended to existing plans. FRDPs are required for all new operating areas.

Information Sharing (open house) – a meeting hosted by the proponent to share the proposed plans with local communities, also provides an opportunity for the local communities to share their thoughts about the proposed operating plan

Mitigation – actions taken during the planning, design, construction and operation of works and undertakings to reduce adverse effects on the land base

Spatial Mapping – relating to the size, shape and position of things, and the relation of objects to each other in space. A geographic information system (GIS) is often used to manage and display spatial data.

Geographic Information System (GIS) – the use of a computer system to overlay large volumes of spatial data of different kinds. The data are referenced to a set of geographical co-ordinates and encoded in computer (digital) format so that they can be sorted, selectively retrieved, statistically and spatially analyzed.

Appendix I

Forestry Branch Circular C-5 – Forest Operation Amendments to Approved forest Management Licensee's (FML) annual Operating Plans (AOP)



Conservation

FORESTRY BRANCH CIRCULAR FOREST MANAGEMENT

To: **Forestry Branch Staff**

No: C-5

From: **Director of Forestry**

Date: June 1, 2005
February 2004

Subject: Forest Operation Amendments to Approved Forest Management Licensee's (FML) Annual Operating Plans (AOP)

Submission and Review Process

All requests for amendments that require more than district NRO approval should be sent directly to regional foresters or IRMT. The IRMT will review each request to determine if it is an AOP amendment requiring the Director of Forestry's approval. If rejected, IRMT will reply directly to FML while copying Forestry Branch. If the request is acceptable, the IRMT should then send a copy of the original AOP amendment request and the IRMT recommendation to the manager of the Forest Management and Development Section. All recommendations should clearly cite the block name(s), the FMU, Twp/Rge, approximate block size (ha), projected harvest volumes (m³), and rationale. A reply will be prepared for the Director of Forestry to review and sign.

Forest operations requiring public consultation

- operations occurring in any block not identified in the current annual operating plan will require public consultation with the local communities and affected stakeholders. Annual operating plans are considered to include current year blocks, contingency blocks and projected blocks

Forest operations requiring ministerial approval

- opening a road previously gated for long-term access control
- gating a new or previously open road for long-term access control

Forest operations requiring Environmental Branch approval

- any harvest or road construction occurring in operating areas not identified in long-term forest management plans

AOP Amendment requiring Forestry Director's approval

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- adding harvest blocks to the AOP in operating areas previously shown in a forest management plan
- request to harvest contingency or projection blocks scheduled for future years
- adding ≥ 5.0 hectares to a previously approved cutblock
- a maximum of fifteen amendments requiring the Forestry Director's approval are allowed per operating year
- a single amendment may include more than one block

Major block amendments requiring IRMT or regional forester approval

- request to harvest contingency or projection blocks scheduled for the current year
- adding new prescriptions
- changing existing renewal prescriptions
- changes to season of harvest
- stream crossing changes
- cut-block boundary changes > 50 metres
- mitigated buffers on water bodies and other permanent features as mitigated by Manitoba Conservation during the AOP process
- relocating or upgrading primary access roads into and through operating areas
- gating a new or previously open road for short term access control
- changes to debris disposal plans

Minor block amendment requiring district NRO approval

- changes to in-block leave structure
 - in-block road location changes
 - cut-block boundary changes < 50 metres, not within buffers
 - addition of incidental volumes of softwood or hardwood to work permits and AOP (identify who will declare and use the incidental volume not covered in the AOP)
- A copy of each amendment should be added to regional annual operating plan, block and/or road files.

Amendment process

To clarify the respective roles in AOP amendments and to help Forestry Branch manage the many amendment requests received the following information is provided:

- all FMLs should submit requests directly to regions, the FMLs may copy Forestry Branch
- regions will review requests and if rejected reply directly to FML while copying Forestry Branch
- amendments requiring public consultation will not be approved until the public consultation is complete and the results are reported in writing to Manitoba Conservation (IRMT) for review
- if the request is acceptable, then the region will submit their recommendation to approve the amendment request to the manager, Forest Management and Development Section

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- the recommendation letter should clearly cite the block name(s) the FMU, Twp/Rge, approximate block size (ha), and projected harvest volume to be cut (m³) and rationale
- the recommendation should be accompanied by background info (FML request, maps, photos, etc.) if not provided earlier
- Forest Management will prepare a letter approving the AOP amendment
- Forest Management will mail the approval letter to the FML planner and cc the region
- if needed immediately, the letter can be prepared, signed and faxed in short order

Amendment Notification:

In recent years forest management licensees have provided one copy of their annual operating plans to the central public registry. Annually, Manitoba Conservation anticipates that a small number of amendments are required. When the number of AOP amendments provided to any one FML exceeds 10 — or 5 per cent of the volume harvested in the previous year (whichever is exceeded first) — FMLs will be required to submit an AOP amendment package. The AOP amendment package will be appended to the company's annual operating plans located in the central public registry.

AOP amendment packages should be sent to the Environmental Assessment and Licensing Branch as per the address below, as well as copied to the Forestry Branch.

Mr. Bruce Webb
Environmental Assessment and Licensing Branch
Suite 160, 123 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 1A5