



Millar Western Forest Products Ltd.

Chapter 3 – Plan Development

2007-2016 Detailed Forest Management Plan

November 15, 2007



Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 DFMP PRODUCTS.....	1
1.1.1 Harvest Levels.....	1
1.1.2 Spatial Harvest Sequence (SHS).....	2
1.1.3 Values Objectives Indicators and Targets (VOITs).....	2
1.1.4 Company Commitments	2
1.1.5 Other Landbase Influences	2
1.2 DFMP IMPLEMENTATION	3
2. PLAN DEVELOPMENT	5
2.1 PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRESSION	5
2.1.1 Assembly of Plan Development Team.....	6
2.1.2 Interpretation of Planning Standard.....	9
2.1.3 Terms of Reference	10
2.1.4 DFMP Development Communication Plan	10
2.1.5 Forecasting Input Preparation	10
2.1.6 PFMS Development	11
2.2 OTHER DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES	14
2.2.1 Managed Stand Yield Curve Data	14
2.2.2 RFP Checklist	14
2.2.3 Re-scheduling of Operating Ground Rules Revision.....	14
3. CONSULTATION	17
3.1 FIRST NATIONS’ INVOLVEMENT.....	17
3.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT.....	18
3.3 INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER FORESTRY OPERATIONS	20



List of Tables

Table 1. 2007 DFMP development timeline 6
Table 2. Original Public Participation Group Members..... 19
Table 3. Timber Supply Analysis Impact Assessment Group Members..... 21

List of Figures

Figure 1. Plan Development Team - groups and working relationships..... 6
Figure 2. Adaptive management loop and adaptive planning cycle 12



1. Introduction

Millar Western developed its 2007-2016 DFMP over a four-year period beginning in 2003. This chapter provides background on the key DFMP products and describes the plan development progress and timelines and consultation initiatives. In addition it includes a summary of some of the more significant challenges encountered during the development process.

To ensure that all obligations arising from this DFMP are easily accessed, understood and realized, Millar Western has elected to consolidate all commitments, including those being carried forward from the 1997-2006 DFMP, in one location: *Appendix XXIII – Commitments*. Only commitments contained within this appendix are to be construed as obligations of the company.

1.1 DFMP Products

The 2007-2016 DFMP sets the strategic direction for long-term forest management on the DFA. Its primary purpose is to direct forestry operations on the DFA by providing direction to lower-level plans and defining operational controls. This direction is provided through the following Preferred Forest Management Scenario (PFMS) products:

1.1.1 Harvest Levels

The recommended harvest levels for each forestry operator are derived from the timber-supply-analysis component of the forecasting process. Once approved by the Alberta government, the recommended harvest levels become the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) which is apportioned to each forestry operator. AACs will be approved for the 10-year DFMP period, as defined in the planning standard, for the timber years 2007-2016.



1.1.2 Spatial Harvest Sequence (SHS)

The SHS is a listing of polygons to be harvested from the landbase file used in the forecasting process. It defines the harvest schedule for the first two 10-year periods of the 2007 DFMP (2007 – 2016 and 2017 – 2026 timber years). All forestry operators will use SHS polygons to develop Final Harvest Plans (FHP), which become the harvest blocks included in their Annual Operating Plans (AOP). As defined in the planning standard, the difference between the SHS polygons and the FHP cut blocks (i.e. SHS deviation) must be within 20% by the end of the 10-year DFMP. Millar Western formed a DFA Harvest Planning Committee, to address operational issues related to the SHS development, implementation and reporting with the other DFA operators (refer to **Company Commitment 3 – Maintain DFA Harvest Planning Committee**, in *Appendix XXIII – Commitments*).

1.1.3 Values Objectives Indicators and Targets (VOITs)

VOITs provide most of the direction for lower level plans and define operational controls, providing guidance on such matters as meeting landscape targets, balancing the regenerated yield species strata to match forecasting assumptions and goals, structure retention and riparian buffer management. VOITs also describe which elements will be monitored and reported upon, and when the reporting will take place (i.e. in the Annual Report, Stewardship Report, and/or the next DFMP). VOITs are summarized in *Chapter 6 – Sustainable Forest Management Strategy*, and described in detailed in *Appendix XXIII – Commitments*. Individual VOITs are identified in bold type face throughout the 2007-2016 DFMP.

1.1.4 Company Commitments

Company commitments are company-initiated implementation obligations that are not derived from VOITs but serve a similar purpose by outlining some of the objectives the company intends to achieve over the next ten years. Examples of non-VOIT commitments include plans around public participation and data collection to support improved managed stand yield curves, as well as a pledge to maintain the DFA Harvest Planning Committee, which was established during the DFMP development process. Company commitments are contained within *Appendix XXIII – Commitments* and are identified in bold type face throughout the 2007-2016 DFMP.

1.1.5 Other Landbase Influences

Millar Western has sought to identify and explore a number of issues that, throughout the scope of the DFMP, have the potential to greatly influence the DFA in the future. These factors, which include climate change and continued oil and gas exploration, were not incorporated into the forecasting process because they are outside the scope of the DFMP and therefore not represented within the PFMS, but are presented for discussion in *Chapter 7 – Building a Case for Integrated Land Management*.



1.2 DFMP Implementation

In addition to the DFMP, the company and other operators must comply with lower level plans, government directives, regulations and laws. While these additional implementation requirements are not listed in the DFMP, they too must be adhered to by all operators on the DFA. It is incumbent upon all operators to become familiar with and comply with all regulatory requirements, in addition to their own corporate practices, procedures and certification standards.

The 2007-2016 DFMP will take effect when approved by the Alberta government and will remain in place until the approval of the next DFMP, due for implementation at the start of the 2017 timber year.



2. Plan Development

Millar Western's 2007-2016 DFMP was developed over a four-year period, from the fall of 2003 to the fall of 2007. Building on previous DFMP development processes, the project involved a wide range of stakeholders and specialists. It was designed to meet the expectations of CSA Z809-02 (Sustainable Forest Management standards) and the Alberta Forest Management Planning Standard (Version 4.1 – April 2006) (Planning Standard). The outcome is a comprehensive plan that sets forth the company's long-term strategic forest management direction, defining operations for the next 10 years, or until replaced by a new DFMP. In addition, the 2007-2016 DFMP forms the basis for Millar Western's Sustainable Forest Management Plan, a requirement for registration under the CSA Z809-02 standard.

This section outlines the 2007-2016 DFMP development process, focussing on the key milestones and providing further elaboration where applicable. It is not intended to provide a detailed account of all the tasks involved in the plan's development but, rather, a more general description. More detailed information can be found within the other chapters and the appendices.

2.1 Plan Development Progression

The following section describes how the DFMP progressed over the development period. Table 1 illustrates the key phases and timeframes during which they were undertaken.

Table 1. 2007 DFMP development timeline

Phase	2003		2004				2005				2006				2007			
	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Assemble Plan Development Team	█																	
Interpretation of Planning Standard	█		█															
Terms of Reference	█		█															
Development Communication Plan			█															
Forecasting Input preparation			█				█											
PFMS, SHS, VOITs							█				█							
MPB Strategy Direction Change											█							
MPB PFMS, SHS, VOITs											█				█			
Documentation															█			
DFMP Submission															█			

2.1.1 Assembly of Plan Development Team

In 2003, Millar Western began assembling the 2007-2016 DFMP Plan Development Team (PDT), based on the approach used in the preparation of the 1997-2006 DFMP. Shortly into this process, the company recognized that a higher degree of interaction was required among staff, DFA stakeholders, plan developers, researchers and government staff. To achieve this, Millar Western set out to bring together an even larger, more comprehensive, multi-disciplinary PDT consisting of a number of interdependent groups and committees, all of which were overseen by a Steering Committee that met regularly to assess progress and provide direction (Figure 1).

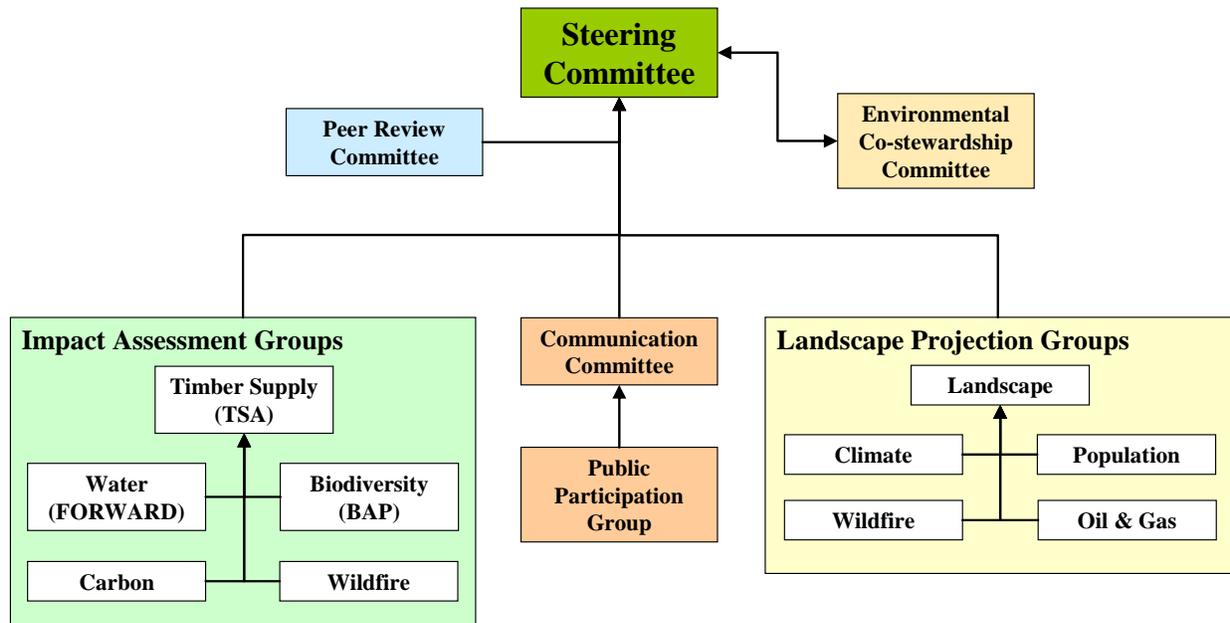


Figure 1. Plan Development Team - groups and working relationships



Once Millar Western had developed a PDT structure, it began recruiting to the various roles. In addition, Millar Western initiated discussions with the DFA's other forestry operators in the summer of 2004 regarding their participation in the DFMP development.

Some of the main challenges in building an effective PDT were, to first of all, foster cross-disciplinary communications necessary for multiple value trade-off analysis and, second, to bridge the at times expansive gap between research and operations worlds. Members of the planning team rose to the challenges and were able to make the decisions and trade-offs necessary to provide effective input into the planning process, thanks in part to a two-day PDT workshop held in December of 2004, which addressed and found solutions for these and other logistical and philosophical issues.

The roles and relationships of these groups and committees are summarized within this section. The individual participants and their roles within the groups and committees are defined within *Appendix II – DFMP Development Communication Plan*.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee was composed of representatives from Millar Western, The Forestry Corp., the Alberta government and the Institut Quebecois D'Aménagement de la Forêt Feuillue (IQAFF), which was responsible for landscape dynamics modelling. It was chaired by Jonathan Russell, who at the start of the DFMP development process served as Millar Western's Chief Forester. (Mr. Russell moved into the role of Woodlands Manager, Whitecourt, in 2006 but continued to chair the Steering Committee until the DFMP's completion.) The Steering Committee provided overall direction to other PDT groups and committees and was the primary mechanism for coordinating review and agreement on the DFMP and its associated components. It also managed interactions between Millar Western and the Environmental Co-stewardship Committee, which served as primary mechanism for consulting with the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation regarding DFMP matters.

Impact Assessment Groups (IAG)

The role of the Impact Assessment Groups (IAG) was to collectively develop a PFMS that would meet or exceed the expectations of all the stakeholders. Building upon the work of the IAGs that were established during the development of the 1997-2006 DFMP, Millar Western formed the following five groups for the development of the 2007-2016 DFMP:

- Timber Supply Analysis (TSA) IAG – This group was responsible for assembling inputs and preliminary assessments for forecasting, the actual forecasting, and the development of the PFMS and SHS. It was also the primary mechanism for incorporating input from other forestry operators and IAGs into the DFMP. During the development of the 1997-2006 DFMP, the TSA IAG's role had been limited to timber supply determination but, for this DFMP, it was expanded to include forecasting for a wide range of values and new disciplines, and for conducting the trade-off analysis used to select the PFMS and to determine VOIT targets.



- Biodiversity Assessment Project (BAP) IAG – This group was responsible for performing biodiversity modeling and predictions, providing inputs to the forecasting process and selecting VOIT indicators and recommending VOIT targets. This group also provided biodiversity-based strategic direction for the compartment harvest sequencing.
- Forest Watershed and Riparian Disturbance (FORWARD) IAG – This group was responsible for developing inventory inputs for hydrological modeling and forecasting processes, for creating water quantity models to guide PFMS development, and for selecting related VOIT indicators and targets.
- FireSmart IAG – This group was responsible for conducting the landscape fire assessment and providing inputs to the TSA IAG for analysis of the wildfire threat assessment of the PFMS under the FireSmart protocols.
- Carbon IAG – This group was responsible for the production of a carbon budget based on the PFMS.

Landscape Projection Groups (LPG)

Landscape projection groups were developed to address issues of sustainability and the cumulative impacts outside the scope of the DFMP. The purpose of LPGs was not to directly influence the 2007-2016 DFMP but, rather, to identify, for purposes of discussion, emerging issues that could have profound impact on the landbase in the future but which are currently outside of the DFMP development process. *Chapter 7 – Building a Case for Integrated Land Management* deals with the findings from the LPG's. The following five LPG's were established as part of the 2007-2016 DFMP PDT:

- Climate Change LPG – This group was responsible for quantifying the projected impact of climate change on physical conditions within the DFA, most notably on stand-level growth and size of the DFA forest.
- Human Population Modeling LPG – This group was responsible for quantifying the projected impact of population dynamics on the DFA, particularly that associated with projected population growth, increased oil and gas activity, tourism and cattle production.
- Wildfire LPG – This group was responsible for quantifying the projected impact of future climate, vegetation and population changes on the occurrence and severity of future wildfires on the DFA.
- Oil and Gas LPG – This group was responsible for quantifying the projected impacts of future oil and gas activity on the DFA forest.
- Landscape Dynamics Modeling LPG – This group was responsible for incorporating the other LPGs projections and assumptions into a spatial cumulative impacts model

for the purpose of quantifying projected impacts from each group, both singularly and cumulatively, over the next 200 years for ecological, economic and social indicators on the DFA.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee, which reported to the Steering Committee, was assembled to develop and implement the DFMP Development Communication Plan (*Appendix II – DFMP Development Communication Plan*) and the DFMP Implementation Communication Plan (*Appendix V – DFMP/SFMP Implementation Communication Plan*). In addition, this committee provided ongoing support for both internal and external DFMP communication and public consultation efforts, including the formation and coordination of the Public Participation Group (PPG). The consultation process is summarized in Section 3 of this chapter.

Environmental Co-stewardship Committee (ECSC)

First-nation input to the 2007-2016 DFMP was primarily achieved through the Environmental Co-Stewardship Committee (ECSC), which was developed under a separate agreement between Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation (Alexis) and Millar Western. DFMP progress summaries, strategies and other key components were presented to this committee at scheduled meetings. Unlike the other PDT groups and committees, the ECSC did not report to the Steering Committee, but the Steering Committee was made aware of issues raised at the ECSC and passed them on to the most appropriate group or committee. A summary of the ECSC consultation and the committee's inputs into the 2007-2016 DFMP is provided in Section 3.1 of this chapter.

Peer Review Committee

The Peer Review Committee, which reported to the Steering Committee, was assembled to coordinate the following aspects of the 2007-2016 DFMP:

- scientific peer review of each of the IAGs and LPGs approaches and findings;
- comprehensive review of the DFMP Development Communication Plan; and
- complete review of the entire DFMP submission and the Alberta government's approval conditions.

Peer reviews of products associated with the IAGs, LPGs and the DFMP Communication Development Plan were designed to provide timely feedback to the developers so that findings and recommendations could be considered and incorporated into the DFMP development process. Refer to *Appendix XXII – Peer Review Summary* for more information.

2.1.2 Interpretation of Planning Standard

Millar Western's 2007-2016 DFMP represents one of the first in the province to be developed under the new Alberta Forest Management Planning Standard (Version 4.1 – April 2006). The Alberta government directed Millar Western to use the recently released standard when the

company initiated development of its DFMP in 2003. The PDT worked through each of the requirements of the new standard, to clarify expectations and to determine how they would be addressed in the DFMP, and proceeded to develop the DFMP on that basis. However, between 2003 and 2006, the planning standard underwent several revisions. Because Millar Western was expected to conform to the latest version of the standard, it needed to revisit and rework various components at numerous junctures, resulting in a delay in the plan's completion. Due to open and frank communication among members of the TSA IAG and Steering Committee, however, interpretation issues were ultimately resolved and plan development was able to continue based on a common understanding of government expectations.

2.1.3 Terms of Reference

The 2007-2016 DFMP Terms of Reference was developed over a two-year period beginning in the summer of 2003. The purpose of the Terms of Reference was to outline the plan development and consultation processes, identify known variances with the planning standard so they could be addressed, list all deliverables and set a development timeline. The Alberta government requested several revisions to the Terms of Reference to reflect changes to the still-evolving planning standard, before finally giving its approval on April 11, 2005 (the final version is dated June 28, 2005).

2.1.4 DFMP Development Communication Plan

In keeping with 2007-2016 DFMP Terms of Reference, Millar Western drafted a DFMP Development Communication Plan (*Appendix II – DFMP Development Communication Plan*), to guide communication and consultation during the DFMP development process. The plan addressed both internal communications (i.e. within the PDT) and external communications (i.e. outside the PDT), and outlined a public participation strategy, summarizing the initiatives to be used to engage external stakeholders (e.g. local community residents, recreational and traditional users of the forest, non-government and special interest group representatives and the general public) in the DFMP development. Among the tactics used to encourage input were open houses, website postings, DFMP newsletters, mail outs, radio and newspaper advertisements, news releases, and the formation of a Public Participation Group. Communications and public consultation efforts are summarized in *Appendix III – Stakeholder Communication Summary*.

2.1.5 Forecasting Input Preparation

Before the IAGs could begin their work, several key reference materials – the inventories, yield curves and the landbase classification – needed to be developed and approved for use:

Inventories

The vegetation inventory (Alberta Vegetation Inventory) used for the 2007-2016 DFMP was approved prior to plan development but was updated in the early stages of the process to reflect landbase depletions, harvest activities and silvicultural treatments. (Refer to *Appendix VI – Development of the Landbase*.) In addition to the vegetation inventory, ecological and wetland inventories were developed to aid in the work of the IAGs.



Managed Stand Yield Curves

As indicated in the 2007-2016 DFMP Terms of Reference, Millar Western had intended to include the managed-stand yield curves from the 1997-2006 DFMP in the 2007-2016 DFMP; however, midway into the plan development process, the Alberta government directed Millar Western to develop new managed-stand yield curves. While Millar Western agreed, the new directive required additional work and contributed to a delay in the plan's completion. Refer to Section 2.21 of this chapter and *Appendix VII – Yield Curve Documentation*, for more information.

Landbase Classification

The landbase classification process took longer to complete than originally anticipated due to the number and complexity of elements involved. Among the landbase issues that need to be resolved were determination of the FMA boundary; classification, identification and clarification of dispositions that had been applied to the DFA; and collection and classification of harvest and survey information from other forestry operators and the Alberta government to enable acceptable regenerated strata assignment and the lengthy process of integration of the IAG datasets. (Refer to *Appendix VI – Development of the Landbase*.)

2.1.6 PFMS Development

Using the process defined below, Millar Western developed an initial even-flow harvest scenario and spatial harvest sequence during 2004-05. The initial scenario and SHS underwent significant refinement in the months that followed, then took a major change in direction in response to the Alberta government's Healthy Pine Forest Strategy. The company finally arrived at the 2007-2016 DFMP Preferred Forest Management Scenario (PFMS) in 2007.

Approach to PFMS

Millar Western uses the Canadian Standards Association's (CSA) adaptive forest management approach, as outlined in the CSA-Z809 SFM standard and illustrated in Figure 2. Adaptive management is a three-phase cycle of planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation that focuses on continuous improvement. Millar Western has practised adaptive management in three distinct ways. As discussed in *Chapter 4 – Previous FMPs and Significant Events*, it has applied lessons learned from the implementation of previous long-term strategic plans, such as the 1997-2006 DFMP, to the development of the 2007-2016 DFMP. Second, it has also used this approach in developing the PFMS, using the feedback from IAGs to continuously refine the VOIT targets until an acceptable balance among them was achieved. Finally, in the largest of the feedback loops, it uses information collected through ongoing monitoring and evaluation to continuously improve its sustainable management of the forest.

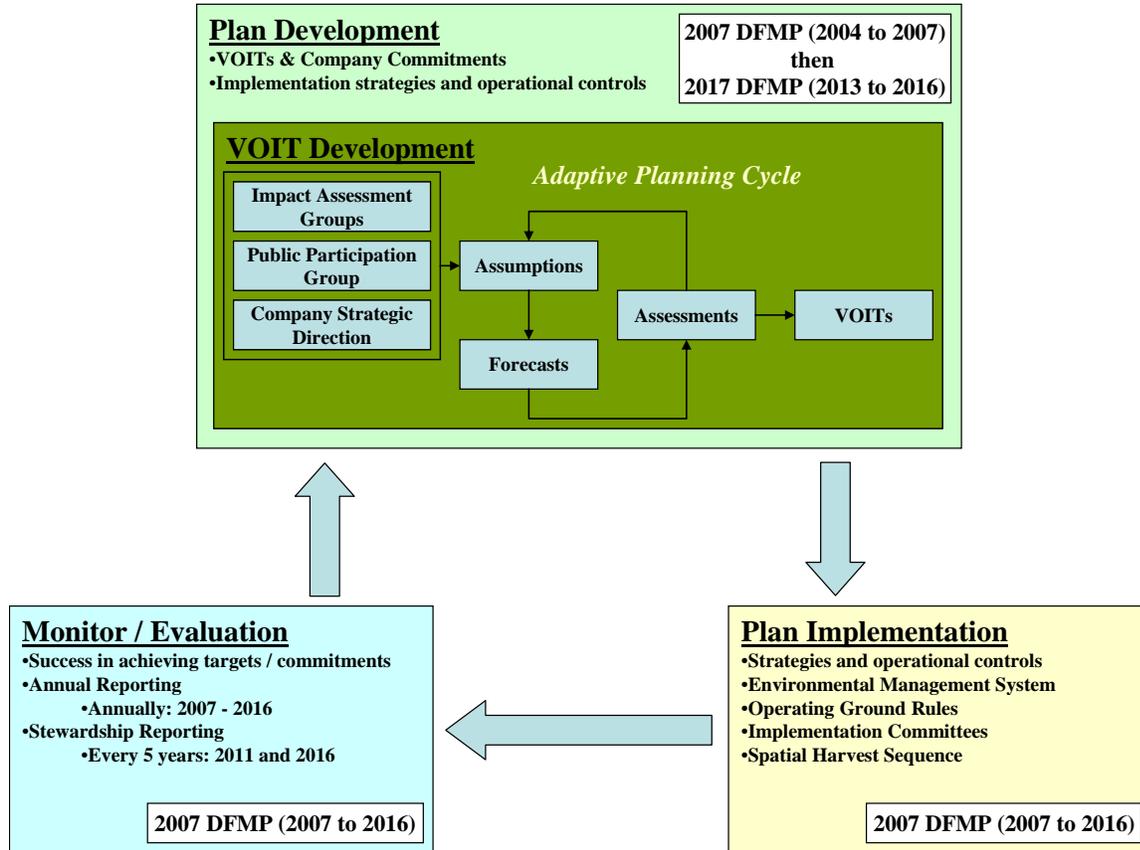


Figure 2. Adaptive management loop and adaptive planning cycle

Achieving a PFMS that would satisfy Millar Western and its stakeholders was a complex, iterative and time-consuming process due, in part, to the many competing goals that needed to be addressed (e.g. harvest level and species mix, compartment availability for harvest, maximum early seral stage area, minimum late seral stage area, minimum proportions of interior forest, maximum water yield limits). As described below, the process was further complicated by the introduction of the Alberta Healthy Pine Forest Strategy in September 2006, which along with Millar Western’s desire to manage for mountain pine beetle required the company to change direction just as its DFMP was nearing completion.

The process of creating a PFMS began with the development of VOITs which, as explained earlier in this chapter, sets the strategic direction for lower-level plans such as AOPs and defined many of the company’s DFMP commitments. In keeping with the requirements of the Alberta Forest Management Planning Standard, most of the VOIT values (i.e. a forest characteristic considered to be important) and objectives (i.e. desired future state or condition for a value) were based on the Alberta government’s mandatory values and objectives, developed to meet CSA-Z809 SFM standard which, in turn, was based on the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers’ (CCFM) six broad SFM criteria. To these mandatory values and objectives, Millar Western added new values and objectives to address input from the TSA IAG, the BAP IAG, the PPG, other forestry operators, the Alberta government and Millar Western staff.



Like the VOIT values and objectives, VOIT indicators (i.e., variables that measure or describe the state or condition of a value) came from multiple sources, including SRD, the IAGs and the PPG. Some indicators were mandated by the Alberta government while others were developed by the company, often on the basis of the advice of experts such as the BAP IAG, which derived most of the biodiversity indicators. Indicators that were too complex for the forecasting model were processed after forecasting was essentially complete, with assessment results used to modify inputs in later scenarios.

A process called a trade-off analysis was used to determine targets (i.e. a specific, quantifiable goal that describes the desired state or condition of the indicator) for these indicators. Recommended targets (e.g. a minimum of 3% area in the old seral stage over the 200-year planning horizon) were integrated into the forecasting model as constraints. The forecasting model was then initiated and attempted to satisfy all of the constraints. Once the model had settled on a scenario, each of the components and their achieved target level were evaluated by appropriate PDT members. If the results were acceptable to the PDT, they were integrated into the DFMP. If they were not, the model was rerun with different constraints, with the new results evaluated by the PDT. The process continued until an acceptable scenario was achieved, one that successfully balanced all competing goals within the DFA. This scenario became the PFMS.

Alberta Healthy Pine Forest Strategy

In mid-to-late 2005, Millar Western began to become concerned about the mountain pine beetle, which had been detected on the eastern slopes of Alberta's Rocky Mountains. Worried that natural controls would fail to keep the insect at bay, the company developed an alternative mountain pine beetle scenario, which it presented at its DFMP open houses in March 2006. In September 2006, the Alberta government introduced the Alberta Healthy Pine Forest Strategy and directed all FMA holders to implement the strategy which called for, among other objectives, a 75% reduction in susceptible pine stands over 20 years.

Millar Western proceeded to develop a mountain pine beetle scenario that, in keeping with the government strategy, targeted a greater ratio of pine stands for harvest, altered the compartment sequence to defer spruce dominated compartments, escalated the harvest of mature pine as much as was practical, and altered the pine age class distribution. The beetle flight in the summer of 2006 and subsequent data collection has confirmed the beetle's presence in Millar Western's FMA, making the insect a real, rather than perceived, risk and validated the company's decision to entertain an alternative scenario as early as the fall of 2005.

It is estimated this change of direction delayed the DFMP's submission by approximately one year. The resulting PFMS and SHS were completed in the spring of 2007, while the VOITs were completed in the summer of 2007. The revised SHS was shared with the Alberta government, which resulted in revisions to accommodate additional wildlife values along important waterway buffers, and with other quota holders, which resulted in some modifications to the constraints. Every trapper on the DFA was provided with customized sequencing reports, but no SHS revisions were requested. The TSA IAG, other forestry operators and the PPG reviewed and approved the VOITs and the PFMS prior to the DFMP's submission to the Alberta government.



Once the PFMS, SHS and VOITs were completed, the company focused on the documentation and review process, which was completed during the fall of 2007. The 2007 DFMP was submitted to the Alberta government during the fall of 2007.

2.2 Other Development Challenges

In addition to challenges discussed earlier, including the introduction of a new planning standard and the arrival of the mountain pine beetle, Millar Western faced other issues during the development of the 2007-2016 DFMP that added to the length and complexity of the project.

2.2.1 Managed Stand Yield Curve Data

Millar Western is committed to sustainable development of the forest resource and to the future of harvesting in the Whitecourt area. As part of this commitment, Millar Western developed a Sustainable Forest Management Policy in 1997 and identified its intention to increase the productivity of the stands it manages. To accompany the establishment of higher productivity stands in the field, increases in growth rates were first predicted in the 1997-2006 DFMP's crop-plan yield curves, and Millar Western intended to include updated curves in its 2007-2016 DFMP. After they were developed, however, the government of Alberta rejected them due to concerns with some of the assumptions and data used to construct the curves. As a result, managed stand yield curves for the 2007-2016 DFMP are only slightly greater than or equal to standing timber yield curves. The company has committed to working with the Alberta government, to develop data collection protocols and to collect data during the next 10 years to validate revised managed stand yield curves for application in the 2017-2026 DFMP. Refer to **Appendix XXIII – Company Commitment 9 - Develop and secure Alberta government approval of a wider-suite of managed stand yield curves** for more information.

2.2.2 RFP Checklist

During TSA IAG meetings, Millar Western committed to working with the Alberta government to update the Registered Forestry Professional checklist. Although Millar Western initially felt this checklist was the government's responsibility, it agreed to a cooperative approach and included the development of a checklist in the DFMP terms of reference. During plan development, however, the Alberta government changed direction, opting to take on checklist development on its own. The resulting checklist (*Appendix I*) required company staff to sign off on components for which they were responsible and to note any deviations from the planning standard. While this change was not significant to the actual plan development, it did involve the time effort of many PDT members, who dedicated significant energy resolving this issue and the expectations surrounding the application of the checklist.

2.2.3 Re-scheduling of Operating Ground Rules Revision

The task of revising Millar Western's Operating Ground Rules to align with the implementation of the 2007 DFMP was originally scheduled for completion, within the Terms of Reference,



during the DFMP development. However, given the status and the number of revisions Millar Western has observed between the Alberta government and other FMA holders, Millar Western proposed, and the government agreed, that this process would begin following DFMP approval. Refer to **Appendix XXIII – Company Commitment 5 – Revise FMA Operating Ground Rules** for specifics. To ensure tight linkages between the 2007 DFMP assumptions and the Operating Ground Rules, some of the more significant revisions, such as downed woody debris and structure retention were addressed in the 2007 DFMP and will be included in the Operating Ground Rules revision process.



3. Consultation

3.1 First Nations' Involvement

The Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation is the only first nation with reserve land situated within the Millar Western FMA. The Alexis First Nation occupies Indian Reserve No. 133, which is located in Glenevis, roughly 75 km southeast of Whitecourt, along Highway 43. The band also controls Reserve Area 232, which is a 3,500 ha reserve located northwest of Whitecourt in W13, covering portions of Townships 60 – 61, Ranges 12 - 13; Reserve 232 is currently unoccupied.

In 2004, Millar Western Forest Products Ltd. and the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation announced the signing of a major economic development agreement. Four years in the making, the Forestry and Economic Development Agreement (FEDA) formalizes and expands upon past efforts to work together in the responsible development of forest resources in areas where the parties have usage rights and traditional ties. It is a comprehensive agreement on cooperative resource use and protection that sets a progressive standard for industry and first-nation relations in the province of Alberta. Among the key features of the FEDA are the establishment of an Environmental Co-Stewardship Committee (ECSC) and provisions for the advancement of training and employment opportunities for Alexis members in Millar Western forestry operations, including harvesting and reforestation contracts.

For Millar Western, the ECSC has become the main vehicle for consulting with the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation on matters relating to forest management, including the review of short- and long-term plans such as the DFMP. The ECSC met ten times during the DFMP development phase (2005: January 7, June 8 and August 24. 2006: January 11, March 15 and May 16. 2007: January 8, March 26, May 2 and June 27), with trapping emerging as one of the key issues. Further to concerns expressed by the band, Millar Western arranged meetings with SRD officials, to clarify rules regarding trap-line ownership and transfer issues. A reflection of the input of the ECSC, the DFMP includes several VOITs that speak to the company's



commitment to continue to partner with the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation on matters relating to economic development and forest management.

As the DFMP development phase approached its conclusion, the Alberta government identified three additional aboriginal communities whose traditional land-use areas may overlap with Millar Western's operating areas, and urged Millar Western to enter into a dialogue with these communities. The company approached the Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council (LSLIRC), the Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, and the Alexander First Nation in writing, to gauge their interest in becoming involved in this and future forest management planning processes. To date, the company has been successful in meeting with the Alexander First Nation, and has provided a series of FMA maps for their review, with further discussion to ensue. Due to scheduling difficulties on both sides, Millar Western has not yet been able to meet with the LSLIRC, but is planning to make a presentation at an upcoming council meeting. Millar Western has invited all aboriginal communities operating in and around its FMA to participate in a new permanent public consultation body, the Millar Western Public Advisory Group (PAC), which began convening in the early summer of 2007.

3.2 Public Involvement

Effective public participation is a vital step in the development of successful, sustainable forest management plans. With the privilege of harvesting on Crown land comes responsibility to provide avenues for the public to become involved in its forest management activities. In keeping with this commitment, Millar Western developed a public participation process for the development of the DFMP, to provide stakeholders, including local community residents, recreational and traditional users of the forest resource, non-governmental and special interest groups, and other industrial users, with opportunities to contribute to the development of the plans, as well as to attain knowledge of issues related to the management of forest values.

While Millar Western employed various methods to involve the public during the development of the 2007-2016 DFMP, the cornerstone of its public participation program was the Public Participation Group (PPG), which was formed in 2004. Identified stakeholders were invited to form a committee, not only to learn about the company's forest management plans but to participate in the identification of values for consideration within the DFMP. In order to meet the public consultation requirements of the Alberta Planning Standard, the PPG operating rules were aligned with the CSA-Z809 standard.

Over its nearly three-year term, the PPG made several significant contributions to the DFMP, particularly to the refinement and expansion of the Values, Objectives, Indicators and Targets (VOITs); it not only recommended changes to existing VOITs but recommended the addition of new ones. The group's activities and conclusions are contained in the member-endorsed PPG Report (*Appendix IV – Public Participation Group Report*). Table 2 lists the original PPG members and their affiliations.

**Table 2. Original Public Participation Group Members**

Name	Affiliation	Role
Choma, Deb	Millar Western Forest Products Ltd., Edmonton	Chairman
Bauer, Jerry	Millar Western Forest Products Ltd., Edmonton	Facilitator
Russell, Jonathan	Millar Western Forest Products Ltd., Whitecourt	Company Representative
Hilts, Ray	Millar Western Forest Products Ltd., Whitecourt	Company Representative
Berg, Colin	Whitecourt Local Advisory Committee	Public Advisor
Caron, Leann	Woodlands County	Public Advisor
Edney, Deb	Kentek Forest Services Ltd.	Public Advisor
Hellekson, Ron	Alberta Trappers Association	Public Advisor
Holub, Dale	Town of Swan Hills	Public Advisor
Manweiler, Alex	Trailblazers Snowmobile Club	Public Advisor
Porter, Ken	Alexander Forest Services	Public Advisor
Price, Don	Burlington Resources	Public Advisor
Seabrook, Carmelle	N/A	Public Advisor
Thain, Trevor	Town of Whitecourt	Public Advisor

The PPG was only one of several consultation groups that Millar Western met with during the course of the DFMP development process, to seek input and advice. Others included the Swan Hills Forest Communications Group and the Whitecourt Regional Forest Advisory Committee. Each of these groups brought together forest companies operating in the area and residents, and played a role in reviewing plans and identifying local forest values.

Open houses held over the course of the DFMP development phase were another key element of the public participation process. Heavily promoted through radio and newspapers advertisements and posters, these open houses provided information about forest planning and gave the public the opportunity to review proposed plans and provide feedback and input. As described below, the company held three open house sessions between 2004 and 2006.

- November 2004** – An open house was held in Whitecourt on November 24, 2004, to introduce the DFMP process. In advance, a mail-out entitled *Sustainable Forest Management: Your Role, Your Opportunity, Your Voice* was distributed to all Whitecourt households. As well as promoting the open house, the brochure provided an overview of Millar Western’s history, FMA area and the DFMP development process. The open house drew a small but interested audience, which was offered a wide range of information about Millar Western’s FMA area and the plan development process. Staff from Millar Western and The Forestry Corp. were on-hand to answer questions and distribute detailed FMA area maps that identified roads, seismic activity and traplines, to interested participants.
- January 2006** – An open house was held in Glenevis on January 11, 2006, to provide the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation with an opportunity to provide input into the DFMP planning process. Staff from Millar Western and The Forestry Corp. walked visitors through maps identifying proposed areas of operation, seeking to identify values of concern to the community so they could be accommodated within the final DFMP.
- March 2006** – Open houses were held in Swan Hills, Ft. Assiniboine and Whitecourt, on March 14, 15, and 16, respectively, to receive community input into the spatial harvest sequences (SHS) as well as to continue the process of identifying forest



values. Those unable to attend the open houses were urged, through advertisements, to visit a “virtual” open house established on the company’s website (www.millarwestern.com), where all open-house materials were posted in an effort to improve public access to information. The open houses attracted a strong turnout, particularly from the trapping community, who came to learn more about the impact of company operations on traplines and to discuss habitat preservation for fur-bearing animals. One of the many results of this exchange of information was the establishment of a pine marten nesting-box study with Lakehead University of Thunder Bay, Ontario, which recently earned Millar Western the Alberta Trappers Association’s Habitat Gain Award.

Details of all internal and external communications and public consultation efforts are included in *Appendix III – Stakeholder Communication Summary*.

As well as meeting the public consultation requirements of CSA-Z809, Millar Western believes it has realized the objectives of the external communications component of the *DFMP Development Communication Plan (Appendix II)*, which was to ensure that perspectives of Millar Western employees and other stakeholders were reflected in the DFMP, and that public awareness was achieved. As described in the *DFMP/SFMP Implementation Communication Plan (Appendix V)*, Millar Western intends to maintain many of the consultation mechanisms introduced during the DFMP development phase through the implementation phase, to continue to provide the public with opportunities to contribute to the sustainable management of the forest resources.

3.3 Involvement of Other Forestry Operations

In addition to involving aboriginal communities and the public, Millar Western sought the input of another important stakeholder group – the other forestry companies operating within its FMA: Mostowich Lumber Ltd. (purchased by Millar Western on August 1, 2007), Weyerhaeuser Canada Limited, Spruceland MillWorks Inc., OK Lumber Ltd., Fort Assiniboine Lumber Ltd. and those who acquire fibre under the W13 Miscellaneous Timber Use program (as represented by SRD). The main vehicle for involving these other companies was the Timber Supply Analysis (TSA) Impact Assessment Group (IAG) (Table 3). The TSA IAG was responsible for the major timber-supply products, such as harvest level determination, the SHS and the identification of associated strategic and operational harvesting, renewal and access activities. The TSA IAG subsequently struck a subcommittee – the Spatial Harvesting Sequencing Subgroup – (later renamed the DFA Harvest Planning Committee) which was tasked with the operational review and development of the final SHS.

**Table 3. Timber Supply Analysis Impact Assessment Group Members**

Name	Affiliation	Role
Burkell, Grant	The Forestry Corp.	Chairman and Author
Hilts, Ray	Millar Western Forest Products Ltd., Whitecourt	Operations Coordinator
Martens, Brooke	The Forestry Corp.	Timber Supply Analysis
Aarsen, Richard	Fort Assiniboine Local Deciduous Timber Committee (FALDTC)	Advisor
Dermott, Con	Mostowich Lumber Company	Advisor
Gooding, Ted	The Forestry Corp.	Advisor
McCready, Tim	Millar Western Forest Products Ltd., Whitecourt	Advisor
Mostowich, Arnie	Mostowich Lumber Company	Advisor
Price, Daryl	Sustainable Resource Development, Edmonton	Advisor
Russell, Jonathan	Millar Western Forest Products Ltd., Edmonton	Advisor
Scatcherd, Doug	Millar Western Forest Products Ltd., Whitecourt	Advisor
Scott, Paul	Weyerhaeuser Company Ltd.	Advisor
Sieusahai, Perm	Spruceland Millworks Inc.	Advisor
Thompson, Don	Millar Western Forest Products Ltd., Whitecourt	Advisor
Wallach, Brian	Sustainable Resource Development, Woodlands Area Contact	Advisor

While the TSA IAG expended great effort in ensuring that the Patchworks sequences were socially, economically, and biologically feasible, Millar Western, aware of the program's limitations, undertook a number of additional reviews to ensure the operational feasibility of the SHS, the two most comprehensive of which took place in August 2005 and in the fall of 2006.

As described in greater detail in *Chapter 5 – Forecasting and the Preferred Forest Management Scenario*, the August 2005 SHS review entailed the distribution of the SHS to all interested parties, including other forestry operators. As a result of the review, the W13 harvest sequencing was improved to include the addition of new targets to address some of the concerns arising from the Biodiversity Assessment Project IAG. A second review in the fall and winter of 2006 involved a small amount of field reconnaissance but was largely an office assessment. The SHS was scrutinized in detail, to ensure sequenced stands were in operational shapes and locations. Three companies – Mostowich Lumber, Spruceland Millworks and Weyerhaeuser – provided detailed assessments of the SHS as it related to their historical operating areas. In order to take their comments into account, all input received during these reviews was loaded into the forecasting model to rebalance the SHS.

Based on these consultation activities and the feedback received, Millar Western is confident that all other forestry companies operating in its FMA are aware of the contents of the SHS and its implications for their operations, and have no outstanding issues or concerns with the path forward.



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