

# **Detailed Forest Management Plan Approval Decision**



**Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd.  
Slave Lake, Alberta**

**Forest Management Agreement  
#9700036**



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**Date: November 4, 2005  
Effective: May 1, 2005**

**Approved by: Original Signed by  
D. (Doug) A. Sklar, RPF  
Executive Director  
Forest Management Branch  
Public Lands and Forests Division**

## ***Executive Summary***

*The approval of forest management plans is the mandate of the Executive Director of the Forest Management Branch (FMB), Public Lands and Forests Division (PLFD) of the Department of Sustainable Resource Development (department). This Approval Decision documents the rationale, and conditions of approval for the Vanderwell Industries Ltd., (Vanderwell) Detailed Forest Management Plan (DFMP) dated March 18, 2005. This approval provides direction for the successful and efficient implementation of the DFMP.*

*Vanderwell regulated forestry professionals have validated (signed and sealed) the DFMP. It has also been reviewed by government professional staff (see Table 1). Professional validation indicates the DFMP is accurate as well as practical and feasible and has been prepared with due diligence. I commend Vanderwell and those people who have contributed to the DFMP for their efforts to address the complex issues of forest management.*

*The conditions in this Approval Decision are consistent with the terms of the Forest Management Agreement and failure by Vanderwell to fulfill the direction provided in this Approval Decision shall place the Company in default of its Forest Management Agreement.*

## ***Approval Conditions***

### ***Approval Condition 7.1 – Coniferous Understorey Management***

- i. All future understorey inventories shall meet Alberta's interpretation standards for coniferous species under a deciduous canopy.*
- ii. At least 50% of the sequenced stands with coniferous understoreies must be harvested in the first five-year period.*
- iii. Pre-harvest and post-harvest surveys must be completed on all understorey protection harvest areas using methods as agreed to by the Senior Manager, Harvesting and Renewal Section. Vanderwell's Understorey Protection Success Report must be submitted to the department annually.*
- iv. A 5-year Stewardship Report must be submitted describing the success of the understorey protection strategies. If the strategies and/or the transition assumptions made in the DFMP are found to be inaccurate, the department may require the Company to recalculate the harvest levels.*
- v. Vanderwell's Growth and Yield Monitoring Program must include a methodology to verify the coniferous understorey transition assumptions made in the DFMP.*

### ***Approval Condition 8.1 – Structure Retention Monitoring***

- i. By January 1, 2006, Vanderwell shall design a cost effective and practical field assessment program for structure retention monitoring and reporting acceptable to the Senior Manager, Forest Planning Section.*
- ii. Merchantable volume in excess of 3% retained for structure shall be chargeable as AAC production and shall be reconciled every 5 years at the end of each cut control period. Failure to meet this deadline or to annually report these statistics shall result in a reduction of the FMA AAC by 3% effective May 1, 2005. The approved Structure Retention Monitoring program must annually assess the structure retained and shall report the results in the 5-year Stewardship Report.*

**Approval Condition 9.1 – Growth and Yield Program**

- i. *By March 1, 2006, Vanderwell shall submit an updated Growth and Yield Program, acceptable to the Senior Manager, Resource Analysis Section that supports the approved DFMP.*

**Approval Condition 10.1 – Miscellaneous Timber Use (MTU)**

- i. *Vanderwell may harvest the non-utilized portion of the MTU allocation subject to the approval of the Company's annual written request for such, by the Public Lands and Forests Division Area Manager.*

**Approval Condition 11.1 – Aboriginal Consultation**

- i. *Vanderwell shall keep complete and accurate written records of its consultations with First Nations; i.e., comments received, and how concerns identified have been addressed and incorporated into forest management planning. This information shall be reported in Vanderwell's Stewardship Report and shall also be incorporated into the next DFMP.*
- ii. *When Alberta's policy for First Nation's consultation is complete, the Company shall work with the department in identifying necessary action plans, and if required, sections within the DFMP that shall be amended.*

**Approval Condition 12.1 – Spatial Harvest Sequence**

- i. *Vanderwell must follow the mapped 10-year harvest sequence as revised and presented in the updated March 18, 2005 DFMP.*
- ii. *To address operational planning concerns, all timber disposition holders are authorized to modify the spatial harvest sequence (SHS) by deleting no more than 20% of the total sequenced area in each compartment, within each decade, while harvesting no more than 100% of the total area within the SHS by compartment, by decade.*
- iii. *Preference should be given to selecting stands from the second 10 years of the SHS (years 11 to 20) when replacing deleted stands (from (ii) above). Where this is not feasible, replacements may be made from any other stand identified in the approved net landbase of the DFMP.*
- iv. *Where timber operators exceed the variance described in (ii), the Forest Area Manager, may require the completion of a compartment assessment and the Senior Manager, Forest Planning Section may recommend the adjustment of the approved AAC to reflect the impact of the variances.*
- v. *The department requires the variance from the SHS to be reported annually, and the 5-year Stewardship Report to analyze the variance from the SHS.*
- vi. *The department will generally not request a modification of the approved harvest sequence for the first 10 years of the planning period unless required by a change in legislation or a policy approved by the Minister.*

**Approval Condition 14.1 - Un-even Flow Deciduous Harvest Levels**

- i. *Vanderwell must adhere to all Alberta legislation and policy regarding timber production control.*
- ii. *Vanderwell must adhere to the AACs and periodic cuts identified in Table 2 and Table 3 in this Approval Decision.*

**Approval Condition 15.1 – Incidental Coniferous Replacement Strategy**

- i. *By May 1, 2006 Vanderwell shall develop a strategy to ensure that incidental coniferous volume will be maintained through time on the deciduous landbase.*

**Approval Condition 16.1 – Alternative Regeneration Standards**

- i. *Vanderwell must develop alternative regeneration performance standards acceptable to the department prior to the approval of its next DFMP*

***Approval Condition 18.1 – Industrial Salvage Timber***

- i. *All timber depleted (salvage timber) by non-forestry operations shall be counted and reported as production for cut control purposes.*
- ii. *The volumes used shall be those stated in timber damage assessment tables.*
- iii. *The volumes shall be charged to each timber disposition proportional to the allocation of the AAC by covergroup (C, CD, DC, D).*
- iv. *By December 1, 2005, Vanderwell shall implement a salvage timber volume tracking and reporting system acceptable to the Senior Manager, Timber Production, Auditing and Revenue Section.*

***19. Authorization***

*The Detailed Forest Management Plan for the Vanderwell FMA area dated March 18, 2005 is approved subject to the Approval Conditions being met, and the Annual Allowable Cuts presented in this Approval Decision.*

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## 1. Introduction

The approval of forest management plans is the mandate of the Executive Director of the Forest Management Branch (FMB), Public Lands and Forests Division (PLFD) of the Department of Sustainable Resource Development (department). This Approval Decision documents the rationale, and conditions of approval for the Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd. (Vanderwell) Detailed Forest Management Plan (DFMP) dated March 18, 2005. This approval provides direction for the successful and efficient implementation of the DFMP.

Vanderwell regulated forestry professionals have validated (signed and sealed) the DFMP. It has also been reviewed by government professional staff (see Table 1). Professional validation indicates the DFMP is accurate as well as practical and feasible and has been prepared with due diligence. I commend Vanderwell and those people who have contributed to the DFMP for their efforts to address the complex issues of forest management.

The conditions in this Approval Decision are consistent with the terms of the Forest Management Agreement and failure by Vanderwell to fulfill the direction provided in this Approval Decision shall place the Company in default of its Forest Management Agreement.

## 2. Government of Alberta Participants: Detailed Forest Management Plan Appraisal

The following Government of Alberta staff participated in the appraisal of the Vanderwell DFMP. Comments and recommendations from staff are addressed in this Approval Decision. I extend my thanks to staff for their personal and professional commitment to the task.

**Table 1 Government of Alberta Participants**

<b><u>Government Reviewer</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Registration</u></b>	<b><u>DFMP Component</u></b>
Jamie Bruha, RPF	Senior Forester, Harvest and Renewal Section	CAPF # 419	All sections
Dave Derosa	Area Fisheries Biologist		Fisheries
Brad Epp, RPF	Forest Management Planning Forester, Forest Planning Section	CAPF # 604	All sections
Mark Feser, RPF	Area Forester, Lesser Slave Area	CAPF # 532	All sections
Greg Greidanus, RPF	Growth and Yield Forester, Forest Biometrics Unit	CAPF # 671	Growth & Yield, Net Landbase, Timber Supply Analysis
Mark Heckbert	Wildlife Biologist		Biodiversity and Habitat



Grant Klappstein, RPF	Biometrics Forester, Forest Biometrics Unit	CAPF #768	Growth & Yield
Scott Milligan, RPF	Senior Manager, Harvest and Renewal Section	CAPF # 434	All sections
Dave Morgan, RPF	Manager, Forest Biometrics Unit	CAPF # 270	Growth & Yield
Daryl Price, RPF	Senior Manager, Resource Analysis Section	CAPF # 081	Growth & Yield, Net Landbase, Timber Supply Analysis
John Stadt	Forest Ecology Specialist	ASPB	Biodiversity and Habitat
Robert Stokes, RPF	Senior Manager, Forest Planning Section	CAPF # 500	All sections

CAPF – College of Alberta Professional Foresters

ASPB – Alberta Society of Professional Biologists

### **3. Forest Management Plan Area**

The area under consideration is the Forest Management Agreement (FMA) area of Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd. FMA #9700036 allocated to the Company through Order-in-Council 313/97, dated July 23, 1997. The FMA area is within Forest Management Unit (FMU) S7.

The FMA is located in the central part of the province, and spans portions of the Central Mixedwood natural sub-region. The Landscape Assessment component of the DFMP describes the FMA in greater detail.

### **4. DFMP Background and Process for the Next DFMP**

The planning schedule was for Vanderwell to submit a Preliminary Forest Management Plan (PFMP) prior to August 1, 1998 and a DFMP by August 1, 2002.

During the development of the PFMP the FMA experienced several forest fires. The impacts to the timber supply from each fire were assessed and therefore delayed the process. As a result, a DFMP submission extension to July 1, 2004 was granted.

Department review of the July 1, 2004 DFMP identified a number of issues to be addressed prior to being considered for approval. Between January and March 2005, Vanderwell and department staff met to resolve the outstanding issues. The result of this effort was the resubmission of Vanderwell's DFMP.

The Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd. March 18, 2005 DFMP is a ten-year plan. An updated DFMP must be approved prior to May 1, 2015.

## 5. Public Involvement

FMA sections 10(1) and 10(2) require Vanderwell to conduct an acceptable public involvement process. DFMP section 12 describes Vanderwell's work in this regard. To solicit feedback and facilitate public awareness of its forest management activities, Vanderwell included public members and stakeholders on its core DFMP planning team, and consulted the Slave Lake Forest Resource Advisory Committee (SLFPAC) to discuss its forest management plans and operations.

Vanderwell is expected to continue its efforts to conduct meaningful public involvement throughout the DFMP implementation. Meaningful consultation is characterized by sincere efforts to help stakeholders understand the implications of plans, sincere efforts to make the plans available at a time and in a manner sufficient for stakeholders to read and study, and sincere and accurate explanations of how the interests and concerns of stakeholders have been addressed.

## 6. Approval Scope

This Approval Decision relates to the Vanderwell DFMP dated March 18, 2005. All coniferous and deciduous timber operators within the FMA area shall conduct its activities in accordance with the DFMP and the approval conditions.

Vanderwell shall meet the requirements (dates and content) of the Approval Conditions unless the Executive Director, Forest Management Branch, agrees to alternate requirements in writing.

In this Approval Decision **bolded text** identifies specific timelines, requirements and the department manager responsible for the review. Non-bolded text provides the rationale for the condition and specific considerations to be addressed in meeting the condition.

In the event of an inconsistency between the DFMP and existing, new or revised legislation or regulation, the legislation or regulation shall apply.

### Approval Conditions

#### 7.0 Coniferous Understorey Management

Vanderwell has determined that approximately 18% of the stands on the net landbase contain coniferous understoreys. The DFMP preferred forest management strategy incorporates many strategies to protect coniferous understoreys. I commend Vanderwell for committing to such an ambitious program. However, the absence of growth response data and a detailed understorey inventory requires that the Company be diligent in monitoring those strategies.

I believe the assumptions made in the TSA are acceptable considering the magnitude of the area sequenced. Therefore the risk of negative consequences is low but pre-harvest and post-harvest survey programs to assess and report on the success of the strategies are necessary.

#### **Approval Condition 7.1 – Coniferous Understorey Management**

- i. All future understorey inventories shall meet Alberta’s interpretation standards for coniferous species under a deciduous canopy.**
- ii. At least 50% of the sequenced stands with coniferous understoreys must be harvested in the first five-year period.**
- iii. Pre-harvest and post-harvest surveys must be completed on all understorey protection harvest areas using methods as agreed to by the Senior Manager, Harvesting and Renewal Section. Vanderwell’s Understorey Protection Success Report must be submitted to the department annually.**
- iv. A 5-year Stewardship Report must be submitted describing the success of the understorey protection strategies. If the strategies and/or the transition assumptions made in the DFMP are found to be inaccurate, the department may require the Company to recalculate the harvest levels.**
- v. Vanderwell’s Growth and Yield Monitoring Program must include a methodology to verify the coniferous understorey transition assumptions made in the DFMP.**

#### **8.0 Structure Retention in Harvested Areas**

Throughout the province, forest industries practise green tree retention within harvest areas to create residual (post harvest) stand structure. The department has approved detailed forest management plans that propose structure retention targets ranging between 1% and 15% of merchantable volume. Vanderwell’s approach is consistent with this as the Company has committed to maintain 3% of the net productive area.

Vanderwell has reduced its AAC by 3% to account for the planned structure retention. I believe this strategy is appropriate for this DFMP but requires a practical and cost-effective tracking, and reporting mechanism for timber harvest production reconciliation to be developed. Retained structure exceeding 3% is chargeable as production.

#### **Approval Condition 8.1 – Structure Retention Monitoring**

- i. By January 1, 2006 Vanderwell shall design a cost effective and practical field assessment program for structure retention monitoring and reporting acceptable to the Senior Manager, Forest Planning Section.**

- ii. **Merchantable volume in excess of 3% retained for structure shall be chargeable as AAC production and shall be reconciled every 5 years at the end of each cut control period. Failure to meet this deadline or to annually report these statistics shall result in a reduction of the FMA AAC by 3% effective May 1, 2005. The approved Structure Retention Monitoring program must annually assess the structure retained and shall report the results in the 5-year Stewardship Report.**

## **9.0 Growth and Yield Monitoring Program**

A credible Growth and Yield Program is imperative to collecting information for use in future timber supply analyses as well as for verifying current DFMP yield assumptions.

### **Approval Condition 9.1 – Growth and Yield Program**

- i. **By March 1, 2006, Vanderwell shall submit an updated Growth and Yield Program, acceptable to the Senior Manager, Resource Analysis Section that supports the approved DFMP.**

## **10.0 Miscellaneous Timber Use**

Vanderwell's FMA states:

*(2) The Minister also reserves the following rights to the timber on the forest management area:*

*(d) the right, after consulting with the Company, to issue short term timber dispositions from within the forest management area for a Miscellaneous Timber Use program and allocate timber for local contractors provided that the annual allowable cut for these dispositions does not exceed 1,000 cubic metres of deciduous timber annually;*

This deciduous volume may be utilized by Vanderwell on an annual basis if the Public Lands and Forests Division Area staff determine there is no local demand for this timber.

### **Approval Condition 10.1 – Miscellaneous Timber Use (MTU)**

- i. **Vanderwell may harvest the non-utilized portion of the MTU allocation subject to the approval of the Company's annual written request for such, by the Public Lands and Forests Division Area Manager.**

## **11.0 Aboriginal Consultation**

The Government of Alberta is currently developing policy outlining Alberta's role in consultation with First Nations. Future government policy regarding Alberta's role may

require amendments to the strategy articulated in the DFMP. Therefore the following applies:

#### **Approval Condition 11.1 – Aboriginal Consultation**

- i. Vanderwell shall keep complete and accurate written records of its consultations with First Nations; i.e., comments received, and how concerns identified have been addressed and incorporated into forest management planning. This information shall be reported in Vanderwell’s Stewardship Report and shall also be incorporated into the next DFMP.**
- ii. When Alberta’s policy for First Nation’s consultation is complete, the Company shall work with the department in identifying necessary action plans, and if required, sections within the DFMP that shall be amended.**

#### **12.0 Spatial Harvest Sequence**

The spatial (mapped) harvest sequence (SHS) is the most important output as it implements the strategies the companies must follow to achieve the predicted future forest condition. The future forest condition, while dependent on many factors, is strongly influenced by harvest patterns, intensity and schedules. It presents spatially and temporally how the integration of environmental, economic, and social values will be achieved on the FMA. Adherence to the planned harvest sequence is imperative to achieving the predicted future forest.

#### **Approval Condition 12.1 – Spatial Harvest Sequence**

- i. Vanderwell must follow the mapped 10-year harvest sequence as revised and presented in the updated March 18, 2005 DFMP.**
- ii. To address operational planning concerns, all timber disposition holders are authorized to modify the spatial harvest sequence (SHS) by deleting no more than 20% of the total sequenced area in each compartment, within each decade, while harvesting no more than 100% of the total area within the SHS by compartment, by decade.**
- iii. Preference should be given to selecting stands from the second 10 years of the SHS (years 11 to 20) when replacing deleted stands (from (ii) above). Where this is not feasible, replacements may be made from any other stand identified in the approved net landbase of the DFMP.**
- iv. Where timber operators exceed the variance described in (ii), the Forest Area Manager, may require the completion of a compartment assessment and the Senior Manager, Forest Planning Section may recommend the adjustment of the approved AAC to reflect the impact of the variances.**

- v. **The department requires the variance from the SHS to be reported annually, and the 5-year Stewardship Report to analyze the variance from the SHS.**
- vi. **The department will generally not request a modification of the approved harvest sequence for the first 10 years of the planning period unless required by a change in legislation or a policy approved by the Minister.**

### **13.0 Timber Supply Analysis**

The “*Interim Forest Management Planning Manual Supplemental Guidelines - Timber Supply Analysis Documentation Requirements*” document was the basis for the development of Vanderwell’s DFMP. The department requirements were clearly communicated to Vanderwell, yet some technical elements of the *Supplemental Guidelines* were not completed.

All elements are important in assessing a timber supply analysis, but considering the FMA history, net area and risk, exceptions can be made. The fact that the majority of the FMA was not included in the net landbase due to the past forest fires has resulted in a significantly reduced harvest level. Further analysis at this time would be of little value to the Company or the department. The TSA, in this circumstance is acceptable, however all future timber supply analyses must meet the Forest Management Planning Standards of the day.

### **14.0 Un-even flow Deciduous Harvest Levels**

Vanderwell proposes an even flow of coniferous timber volume and an uneven flow of deciduous timber volume.

The timber supply analysis shows that 1,711 m<sup>3</sup> of deciduous is available annually in years 1-5, and 7,464 m<sup>3</sup> of deciduous is available annually in years 6-10. The AAC and periodic cut use the 20-year average of 4,037 m<sup>3</sup>. As the timber supply is calculated using a single landbase, the un-even flow of deciduous timber may affect the availability of the coniferous volume.

Even flows of primary and secondary species volumes are desirable, however, being that Vanderwell is the only operator affected, I accept this proposal. The Company must make every effort to manage its operations to minimize the impact of this situation on its periodic cut control.

#### **Approval Condition 14.1 - Un-even Flow Deciduous Harvest Levels**

- i. **Vanderwell must adhere to all Alberta legislation and policy regarding timber production control.**
- ii. **Vanderwell must adhere to the AACs and periodic cuts identified in Table 2 and Table 3 in this Approval Decision.**

## **15.0 Incidental Coniferous Replacement Strategy**

Much of the deciduous landbase that Vanderwell is planning to harvest is predicted to contain coniferous understorey. Although a portion of this coniferous understorey will be protected during harvest, Vanderwell must develop an integrated strategy to ensure that incidental coniferous volume is maintained through time on the deciduous landbase.

### **Approval Condition 15.1 – Incidental Coniferous Replacement Strategy**

- i. By May 1, 2006 Vanderwell shall develop a strategy to ensure that incidental coniferous volume will be maintained through time on the deciduous landbase.**

## **16.0 Alternative Regeneration Standards**

The Regeneration Survey Manual establishes provincial reforestation performance standards (provincial survey standard) that are intended to create fully stocked natural stand yields. These standards shall be used until alternative regeneration performance standards are developed that relate to each yield projection used in a DFMP.

### **Approval Condition 16.1 – Alternative Regeneration Standards**

- i. Vanderwell must develop alternative regeneration performance standards acceptable to the department prior to the approval of its next DFMP.**

## **17.0 Forest Health**

Vanderwell's DFMP contains several objectives related to the goal of maintaining a healthy forest. To ensure that there is an integrated approach in achieving this goal Vanderwell must adhere to the "*Alberta Forest Health Strategy and the Shared Roles and Responsibilities between SRD and the Forest Industry*" document.

## **18.0 Industrial Salvage**

Accounting for timber volume drain resulting from non-forestry industrial operations is critical to ensure the approved AACs are not exceeded.

### **Approval Condition 18.1 – Industrial Salvage Timber**

- i. All timber depleted (salvage timber) by non-forestry operations shall be counted and reported as production for cut control purposes.**
- ii. The volumes used shall be those stated in timber damage assessment tables.**
- iii. The volumes shall be charged to each timber disposition proportional to the allocation of the AAC by covergroup (C, CD, DC, D).**

- iv. By December 1, 2005, Vanderwell shall implement a salvage timber volume tracking and reporting system acceptable to the Senior Manager, Timber Production, Auditing and Revenue Section.**

## **19. Authorization**

The Detailed Forest Management Plan for the Vanderwell FMA area dated March 18, 2005 is approved subject to the Approval Conditions being met, and the Annual Allowable Cuts presented in this Approval Decision.



## Approved Annual Allowable Cuts

**Table 1. S07 Historical Allocations and Annual Allowable Cuts**

Company Name	Disposition #	FMU	Landbase Management Type	Coniferous AAC (m <sup>3</sup> /yr)	Deciduous AAC (m <sup>3</sup> /yr)	Utilization
Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd.	FMA9700036	S07	Single	7,879	4,920	15/11
CTPP/MTU	DTP	S07	Single		1,000	15/11
Totals				7,879	5,920	

**Table 2. S07 Allocations and Approved Annual Allowable Cuts**

Company Name	Disposition #	FMU	Landbase Management Type	Coniferous AAC (m <sup>3</sup> /yr)	Deciduous AAC (m <sup>3</sup> /yr)	Utilization
Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd.	FMA9700036	S07	Single	6,581	2,915	15/11
CTPP/MTU	DTP	S07	Single	n/a	1,000	15/11
Totals				6,581*	3,915*	

\* The Annual Allowable Cut has been reduced by 3% to account for the volume planned to be retained within harvest areas as residual structure. Merchantable volume exceeding 3% retained as structure is chargeable as AAC production and shall be reported and reconciled every 5 years at the end of each cut control period.

**Table 3 Periodic Allowable Cuts**

Company Name	Disposition #	FMU	Cut Control Period	Coniferous Periodic Allowable Cut (m <sup>3</sup> /yr)	Deciduous Periodic Allowable Cut (m <sup>3</sup> /yr)	Comments
Vanderwell Contractors (1971) Ltd.	FMA9700036	S07	August 1, 2002 to July 31, 2007	36,472	20,085	<p><b>Periodic allowable cut calculation:</b>            (Previous AAC: Aug. 1, 2002 to April 30, 2005) + (New AAC: May 1, 2005 to July 31, 2007)</p> <p><b>Coniferous</b> = 2.7479 years at 7,879 m<sup>3</sup>/yr + 2.2521 years at 6,581 m<sup>3</sup>/yr.</p> <p><b>Deciduous</b> = 2.7479 years at 4,920 m<sup>3</sup>/yr + 2.2521 years at 2,915 m<sup>3</sup>/yr.</p>