

Ministry of Natural Resources and
Forestry

Ministère des Richesses naturelles et des
Forêts

Bancroft District Office
PO Box 500
106 Monck Street
Bancroft, ON K0L 1C0
Telephone: 613-332-3940
Facsimile: 613-332-0608

Bureau de district de Bancroft
Boîte postale 500
106, rue Monck
Bancroft, ON K0L 1C0
Téléphone: 613-332-3940
Télécopieur: 613-332-0608

January 11, 2021

Katie Krelove
katie@wildernesscommittee.org

Dear Katie,

The information shared in your email on November 17th, 2020, has been reviewed by the Planning Team and we offer the following responses as per your summary of requests for information.

1. FRI maps

FMP mapping products are generated from FRI data which is updated prior to the start of a new FMP planning cycle. The FRI inventory used in the current 2011-2021 FMP is different from the updated planning inventory being used for the new 2021-2031 FMP. This may account for the differences which you have noted. FRI inventory data can be accessed from the GeoHub warehouse at <https://geohub.lio.gov.on.ca/>.

2. and 3. MNR verification of conservation values, including SAR

MNR has reviewed the values information compiled by AFER and would like to propose a meeting to discuss the results of our analysis. We will also provide an overview of the Ministry's risk-based, continuous values collection program to build a better understanding of how values collection work is performed and incorporated into the FMP.

It should be noted that values information is portrayed on operational maps that are available as part of the Stage 3: Review of Proposed Operations which began on January 4th, 2021. Please refer to these mapping products for confirmation of values AOCs for specific blocks that are planned for harvest.

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4. Old-growth Hemlock

The Planning Team and MNRF continue to consider the interests and data you have submitted regarding the protection of old hemlock trees near Catchacoma Lake, including your recent assertion that the precautionary principle should be applied. MNRF will commit to further investigation and analysis of this site to determine if additional provisions such as harvesting to retain some of the key habitat and aesthetic features of old growth forest, as identified in the Ontario Tree Marking Guide, are needed to protect and /or enhance old growth features as part of the new 2021-31 FMP. Additionally, while choosing proposed allocations for Stage 3 – Review of Proposed Operations, the Planning Team considered your concerns with the Old-Growth Hemlock and did their best to reduce the allocation Old-Growth Hemlock across the landscape. The comparison of proposed operations to the long-term management direction will be available for review at Stage 4 – Review of Draft Plan, tentatively scheduled for March-May 2021.

5. Crown Land Use Policy

The Public Lands Act (PLA) provides the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry with the legislative authority to manage Ontario's Crown land. Section 12 of the PLA provides MNRF the basis to carry out land use planning on Crown land south of the Far North boundary. Land use planning is a process by which Crown land and waters are assigned to specific "land use designations" (e.g., general use area, enhanced management area) with associated policies for the types of uses that may or may not occur on those areas. Crown land use planning strives to consider a broad range of interests including those of the public, stakeholder groups and indigenous communities. Planning can result in the establishment of a new designated land use area, changes to existing land use area boundaries, and/or changes to the policies that are associated with a specific area.

Crown land use policy:

1. can apply to Crown land across the province or to a site-specific area
2. outlines where and under what conditions activities can occur on Crown lands and waters in Ontario (i.e., how Crown land can be used)
3. enables MNRF to make subsequent, site-specific decisions about the use and management of Crown land and resources
4. provides context for more detailed resource management planning and the implementation of programs, projects and activities in an integrated, efficient way.

Area-specific Crown land use policy information can be found in the [Crown Land Use Policy Atlas](#) (CLUPA), an interactive database and mapping tool available to the public. An amendment to Crown land use policy (a CLUPA amendment) is required to change area-specific Crown land use designations, the uses that may or may not occur or a land use area boundary. The Guide for Crown Land use Planning (The Guide) provides policy guidance to MNRF staff and others involved in land use planning and for amendments to Crown land use policies for Crown lands under the authority of the PLA, south of the Far North planning area. Information related to Crown land use planning and CLUPA amendments can be found at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/crown-land-planning>. Please note that The Guide will be updated later this winter to reflect the transition of the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act to The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Requests for amendments from external parties are subject to the amendment submission requirements and screening process currently outlined in Section 5.2 of the Guide. Individuals or organizations, including Indigenous communities, members of the public or stakeholders can request an amendment to change Crown land use policies. Requests for land use amendments must be submitted in writing to the appropriate

MNRF office and include:

1. a description of the proposed change, including location information and a map
2. any partners in the amendment proposal and
3. rationale for the amendment and a discussion of its significance and implications

MNRF will review the information and considers several factors (also outlined in section 5.2) in making a decision on whether to proceed. MNRF will provide a written response to the requestor identifying one of three possible outcomes:

1. proceed with planning
2. deny the request, or
3. request further information

As land use planning is a public process, the outcomes of planning are not guaranteed. It is important to note that area-specific land use policies for the Catchacoma Forest area were developed through comprehensive and public Crown land use planning processes and acknowledge the value and importance of the forest resources in the area both recreationally and commercially.

What is the Ministry's role in protected areas under the Provincial Parks and Conservation Act (PPCRA)?

MNRF does not have a role in regulating or managing protected areas under the PPCRA (i.e., conservation reserves, provincial parks). The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) is responsible for the regulation and management of protected areas (Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves) under the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act (PPCRA).

MNRF's role, under the PLA, would be to undertake or facilitate the public land use planning process to assign Crown land to a land use designation that enables the subsequent establishment of Provincial Park or Conservation Reserve through regulation under the PPCRA (e.g., Recommended Provincial Park or Recommended Conservation Reserve). As above, all amendment requests need to be screened according to a number of criteria outlined in the [Guide for Crown Land Use Planning](#), to determine whether or not the request should proceed.

MNRF will only consider requests for land use policy amendments, whose objectives involve the creation of new PPCRA protected areas, where the MECP is supportive of or leading the request.

6. Presentation to the LCC

The LCC has been kept apprised of correspondence and input being provided by your group and respectfully decline the offer for a presentation at this time. LCC member Jane Dumas, also a member of the Planning Team, will continue to participate in discussions and meetings regarding your interests and will provide updates to the committee as needed.

Representatives of the Planning Team would be willing to meet again with your group to provide additional clarity on the items outlined above. Please contact me via email to confirm the meeting arrangements.

Thank you for your continued interest in the forest management planning process, and I trust this ongoing dialogue with the Planning Team will help to address your outstanding concerns.

Sincerely,

Suzy Shalla
A/District Manager
Bancroft District MNRF