

2021 – 2026 Operating Plan

Prince Albert Forest Management Agreement Area

Updated: March 19, 2021

With reconciled 2020/21 harvest volumes

(Original Submission: December 1, 2020)

Prepared for:

Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment
Forest Service Branch
201 - 1061 Central Avenue
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By:

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This plan was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Code, the Prince Albert Forest Management Agreement (FMA) and FMA Side Agreement, approved Forest Management Plan, and the Harvest Volume Schedule and associated utilization standards.

*Signature Redacted for
Privacy*

Diane Roddy, R.P.F.

General Manager, Sakâw Askiy Management Inc.

A Fully Integrated Plan (as defined in Operating Zones Agreement dated effective January 1, 2012 (the "OZA ')) has been developed for the Tolko, Carrier, and Edgewood Planning Areas. Such Fully Integrated Plan complies with the OZA and includes an integrated harvest design that incorporates the species group and harvest design interests of parties holding an Allocation in the Planning Area. To the extent reasonably possible in the circumstances (but, for greater certainty, without in any way changing or modifying the rights or obligations of Allocation holders as set forth in the OZA or otherwise (including, without limitation, those set out in Section 5.5 of the OZA)), Incidental Timber in the Planning Area (that forms part of the allocation of another party) is being fully planned for utilization in a manner consistent with the requirements of the OZA.

Signature Redacted for Privacy

Michelle Young, R.P.F.

Woodlands Manager, Tolko Industries

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Ed Kwiatkowski, R.P.F.

Woodlands Manager, Carrier Forest Products

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Glossary

| | |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| AHPP | Aquatic Habitat Protection Permit |
| FMP | Forest Management Plan |
| FMA | Forest Management Agreement |
| GPS | Global Positioning System |
| HCB | Heritage Conservation Branch |
| HVS | Harvest Volume Schedule |
| IBR | Improved Bush Road |
| IHS | Integrated Harvest Schedule |
| MIT | Management Implementation Team |
| OP | Operating Plan |
| OSB | Oriented Strand Board |
| RMA | Riparian Management Area |
| RPF | Registered Professional Forester |

| | |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| AC Forestry | Agency Chiefs Forestry |
| Carrier | Carrier Forest Products |
| Edgewood | Edgewood Forest Products |
| MLBV | Montreal Lake Business Ventures |
| MLMP | Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp |
| Tolko | Tolko Meadow Lake OSB Division |
| NorSask | NorSask Forest Products |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| ha | hectare |
| m | meter |
| m ³ | cubic meter |
| BP | Balsam Poplar |
| BS | Black Spruce |
| JP | Jack Pine |
| TA | Trembling Aspen |
| TL | Tamarack |
| WS | White Spruce |

1 Introduction

This Operating Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Forest Operating Plan Chapter and Standard of the Saskatchewan Environmental Code, and the Amended and Restated Prince Albert Forest Management Agreement (PA FMA) and accompanying PA FMA Side Agreement. It is also aligned with a strategic 20-Year Forest Management Plan (FMP) for the PA FMA area that came into effect on April 1, 2018. The FMP was prepared under a hybrid of the requirements in the Forest Management Planning Document (August 2007) and the Forest Management Planning Standard (September 2017).

The plan is being submitted by Sakâw Askiy Management Inc. (Sakâw), the corporation that holds the PA FMA on behalf of seven shareholders, to gain approval for consumptive and non-consumptive activities on the FMA landbase. These activities include harvesting (including the staging or storage of wood), road construction, maintenance and reclamation, and renewal (tree planting, scarification, regeneration assessments). The seven shareholders are AC Forestry, Carrier Forest Products, Dunkley Lumber (Edgewood Forest Products operations), Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp, Montreal Lake Business Ventures, NorSask Forest Products and Tolko Industries Ltd. (Meadow Lake OSB Division).

The operating plan covers the five-year period from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2026. The maps submitted will be posted on the Sakaw website at www.sakaw.ca so people who provided input into the development of the plan can see what was submitted. Upon approval, the final maps and documents that make up the plan will be made available on the Sakâw website.

Each of Sakâw's shareholders (allocation holders) contributed to the development of this operating plan following a process outlined in Sakâw's Operating Zone Agreement. The FMA area is partitioned into operating zones, within which a shareholder has been allocated the hardwood volume and a shareholder has been allocated the softwood volume. These operating zones are combined to form three planning areas.

Shareholders collaborated on preparing local-level operating plans under the direction of Planning Area Facilitators, who were responsible for turning those plans into a fully integrated operating plan for their area, then submitting it to Sakâw's General Manager for incorporation into the Sakâw Operating Plan.

Planning Area Facilitators are currently Michelle Young, R.P.F. (Tolko Meadow Lake Division), Ed Kwiatkowski, R.P.F. (Carrier), and Doug Braybrook, R.P.F. (Dunkley Edgewood Division).

Figure 1 shows the planning areas managed by each facilitator.

Responsibility for the harvesting, road, and renewal activities in the proposed harvest areas is identified in tables in the Appendices that are part of this plan.

- Tolko
- Carrier
- Edgewood

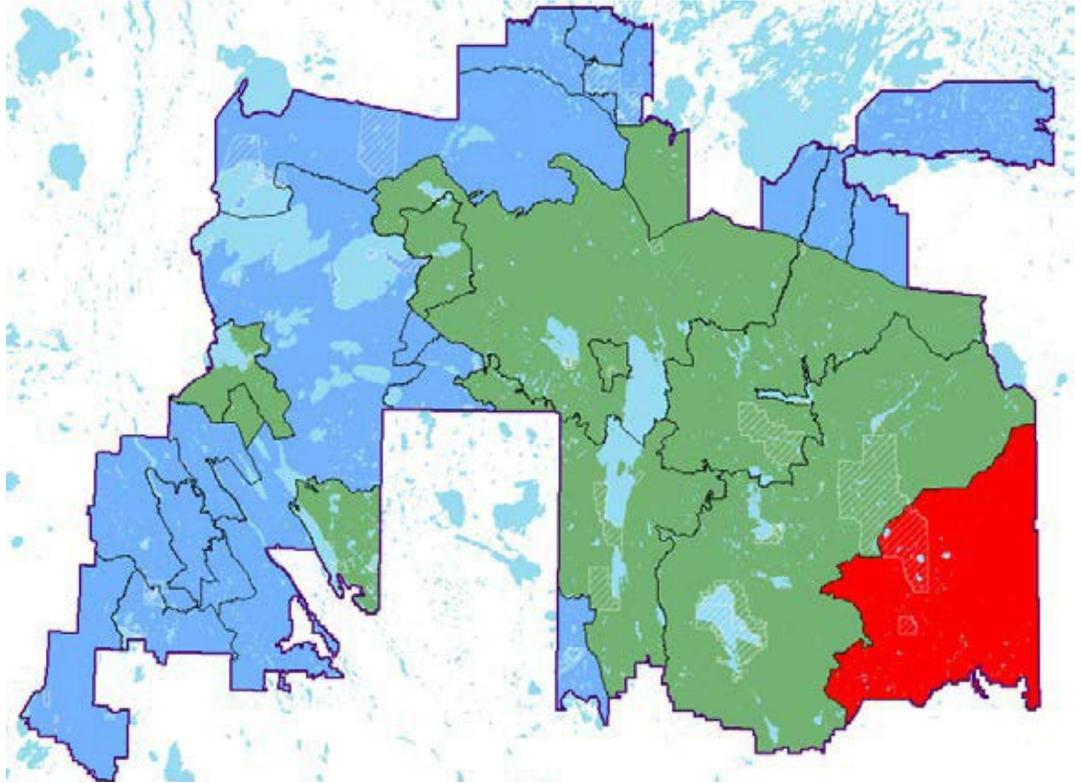


Figure 1 Planning Areas and Facilitators

2 Variances from the FMP, Operating Plan Standard, Licence, HVS

2.1 Variances from FMP

This operating plan is aligned with the 2018-2038 Forest Management Plan (FMP) for the PA FMA area which came into effect on April 1, 2018 and was amended effective April 1, 2020. Operating plan variances from approved FMP strategies and commitments are monitored, reported on, and reviewed annually by an FMP Management Implementation Team (MIT).

A list of FMP variances to report on in this operating plan under section 1-3(1)(b) of the Forest Operating Plan Standard was developed by the Forest Service, and that report follows.

1. Proposed blocks occurring outside of tactical plan areas (FMP Indicator 15)

There are 8,682 ha in 297 operating plan blocks that fall outside of the FMP tactical plan area boundaries with 2 times the expected harvest volume included in the plan. (roughly 4,341 ha at 1X harvest volume). This works out to 9.9% of the planned area being outside of the Tactical Plan, and the cumulative allowable variance is up to 15%. Those blocks and areas are listed in Appendix A.

The reasons for this variance include but are not limited to:

- Portions of the area outside the tactical plan may have been previously planned and approved.
- Blocks are being resubmitted to complete partial harvest, complete road deactivation, or to fully use the planned road system.
- The forest inventory for the FMA area is approximately 18 years old. (It was completed by Weyerhaeuser Saskatchewan from 1999 to 2005 and submitted to Saskatchewan Environment in 2006). This was recognized when developing the tactical plan and historic knowledge of the area was used when possible. Sakaw planners are finding inaccuracies at the ground level. For example 15-18 meter wood is often labelled incorrectly on the west side of the FMA, and areas that are typed as “merchantable” are found to be non-merchantable. There were major areas of blowdown in 2007, 2011, and 2012 that are only partially located, snow press over the last few years and flooding have removed many areas, and stands have had challenges with decadence and mistletoe that make yields far less than planned.
- We are in the 4th year of a wet cycle. Areas that were marginal for summer operations historically are challenging in terms of summer operability. This has meant adjustments to areas originally thought to be accessible in the Tactical Plan.
- Staying out of the caribou Tier 1 area identified in the final range plan for this area is pushing the harvest into other areas.
- An elevated level of stakeholder pushback has resulted in harvesting being deferred until agreements can be reached. This often drives the planned harvest into areas where stakeholder certainty is greater.

Collectively all these factors are contributing to needing to explore options outside of the tactical plan. The variances from the plan this year were greater than last year. Sakaw will continue to monitor and report at the FMP MIT meetings.

2. Proposed blocks impacting old seral deferral areas (FMP Indicator 2)

There are 1,579 ha of old seral deferral areas that are impacted to some degree by the operating plan blocks. Those blocks are listed in Appendix A. The areas within harvest blocks will either be avoided and incorporated into retention patches, or suitable replacements will be found for them, ensuring Indicator 2 remains on track.

Modifications to the deferral areas can be made under the circumstances described in FMP Indicator 2 and will be managed and tracked during the operating year. An exercise was undertaken in 2020 to remodel the old seral deferral areas and place them into areas where harvesting is restricted and that would not be included in future plans wherever possible. The areas targeted to move them into included:

- Tier 1 caribou zones
- Exclusions/stakeholder commitments
- Riparian areas
- Areas outside the tactical plan
- Islands within muskegs/isolated small pockets of timber.

The remodeling exercise significantly reduced the area of old seral deferral areas impacted by planned harvest blocks. A spreadsheet of all the changes is being kept on file, and the OSD layer has been updated in Sakaw's GIS system.

3. Deviations from the FMP approved utilization standard being requested in operating plan

No deviations are being requested in this operating plan.

4. Blocks where the practice of excess hardwood retention will be used.

The 2021-2022 operating year will be the second of a 3-year approval to leave excess hardwood standing, under conditions and restrictions outlined in the Ministerial approval for FMP Amendment #1 and letter of June 22, 2020.

5. Proposed blocks (area) with the potential to exceed the 5-year maximum harvest area targets (by planning unit and species grouping) by more than 5% or 100 ha, whichever is greater. (Indicator 24)

Planned areas summarized by 16 stratum (4 species groups in each of 4 geographic areas), are shown in Appendix A.

The planned areas are not designed to match the targeted harvest areas, for the following reasons:

- The targets do not include contingency areas that result in planning for 2 times the expected harvest volume
- The planned areas are maximized in the high value areas (most desirable wood sources) to their sustainable limit.
- Caribou Tier 2 habitat areas are being targeted for harvesting merchantable remaining in them.
- The planned blocks are weighted towards mixedwood areas and summer ground to provide options for summer harvesting.

The harvest distribution targets will be managed for throughout the operating year. A post-harvest evaluation of performance against them will show the actual variances and be included in the FMP Annual Report on implementing the FMP.

6. Blocks occurring in Caribou Habitat Tier 1 Areas

The caribou habitat management plan in the approved FMP is being followed, and harvest is not being planned in Tier 1 areas.

In this plan there are also 24.3 km of road in Tier 1 areas that are expected to be travelled on in the 2021/22 operating year, of which 23.2 km are existing, active roads and trail, and the 1 km is a mapping “sliver”. These roads are listed in Appendix A.

Work on FMP Amendment #2 is underway to adapt the FMP to the final range plan for the SK2 Central caribou area.

7. Blocks occurring in an event that will cause event to go beyond 10 years.

None. It is expected that in general, harvest events will be identified after blocks in an area are completed.

8. Blocks with forest health concerns preventing insular retention

Blocks with known mistletoe infections have been identified in the plan as Salvage Mistletoe (SM). When new mistletoe areas are identified during operations, a request for an amendment will be submitted to declare the block as a Salvage Mistletoe (SM) block.

9. Identify if the operating plan is expected to result in variance greater than 25% of the annual limit of Managed Forest Land Base (MFLB) converted to other land uses (Indicator 10a). The variance allowed on 5 year cumulative totals is 5%.

The operating plan is not expected to result in the conversion of more than the annual limit of the MFLB to other land uses. The annual limit is <300 ha, with a 25% variance. The construction of 32.8 km of Class 1 Roads, and 33.5 km of Class 2 Roads is proposed. This converts to 74.9 ha, as calculated under FMP Indicator 10a.

10. Identify blocks within a natural disturbance event >100 ha (a largely contiguous area of stands with >50% stand mortality covering at least 100 ha) where less than 20% of the disturbance area will remain unharvested. (Indicator 12)

None. 1,111 ha of windthrow salvage has been included in Year 1 of this operating plan. Five of the seven windthrow salvage blocks are >100 ha., but they are not considered a natural disturbance event with >50% stand mortality.

11. Identify blocks within 1 ha area where a known listed plant buffer will be established or where a known listed plant is known to exist but will not be buffered, and why. (Commitment carried forward from previous FMP).

If a listed plant is reported through the processes described in #12 below, the Saskatchewan Conservation Data Center (CDC) will be contacted and the direction they provide for that specific species followed. The appropriate action may involve establishing a buffer with a 50 m radius buffer around the plant, or no buffer may be required if the plant is in a winter harvest area and unlikely to be damaged.

12. Identify blocks where a known Conservation Data Center (CDC) listed species will be impacted and a management strategy has been developed, or impacted CDC listed species will be impacted but no management strategy developed, and why. (Commitment carried forward from previous FMP).

All shareholders are certificated to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) standard and meet requirements for developing a program to address the conservation of known sites with viable occurrences of significant species of concern. Species at Risk training is provided through mechanisms such as annual reviews, contractor orientations, contractor manuals, and EMS booklets. Contractors and employees report any sightings to shareholders and ensure reports are completed and entered according to the shareholder's EMS process. These reports are then communicated back to the SK CDC. The SK Co-operative Wildlife Management Survey is also used by some field staff to report sightings.

The status of shareholder certification to the SFI standard will be reported on each year in the annual report to the MIT

13. Identify blocks within the traditional territory of an Aboriginal community where an opportunity to review operating plan has not occurred (Indicator 25)

None. Advertising and letters about the opportunity to review draft forestry plans reached all areas within and adjacent to the PA FMA area, including all the indigenous communities for which the province's duty to consult is triggered by this proposed project.

14. Identify blocks where a known culturally significant aboriginal site exists but was not given consideration under the operating plan (Indicator 26)

None.

15. Identify if the operating plan will not be posted to the Sakaw.ca website (Indicator 30)

The draft maps submitted for review ("submission maps") will be posted on the Sakaw website shortly after they are submitted, in .pdf format. This is being done so people who provided input during development of the plan can see the plans submitted

Once the operating plan maps are approved, the final versions will be posted to sakaw.ca in the form of an interactive "webmap".

2.2 Variances from Forest Operating Plan Standard

Alternative solutions and interim policy direction to requirements in the Forest Operating Plan Standard (FOPS) were proposed by a forest industry subcommittee on October 15, 2020, for application to the 2021-2026 Operating plans. The alternative solutions approved by the Forest Service are listed below. Long term changes to the Forest Operating Plan Standard, and the alignment of it with the Forest Management Plan Standard, are being addressed through a formal standard revision process that is currently underway.

Map Requirements (FOPS 1-1(3))

As opposed to submitting a complete paper copy and digital copy of this plan at time of submission digital copies of all required maps at all scales will be submitted at time of submission. After a cursory review of the submitted plan, paper copies will be submitted for 1:300,000 and 1:50,000 scale harvest maps. Once the plan review nears completion (by March 15, 2021) only maps in which changes were made will be resubmitted in paper copies at all scales (1:300,000, 1:50,000 and 1:15,000). Only

changes identified in the roundtable review would be approved.

Transitional Blocks

Maps submitted initially (on December 1, 2020) will show blocks that are intended to be harvested in the current operating year (2020-21), that may however not get completed and be carried over into the 2021-22 operating year. Those blocks will be shown using a lighter grey depletion colour and the planned block boundary. The volume tables will show zero volume for those blocks.

Any of those “transition” blocks not anticipated to be fully harvested by March 31, 2020 will be changed to show as planned blocks on updated maps, and the volumes remaining will be added back into tables, for submission by March 15, 2021. Completed blocks will be changed to the normal grey depletion colour. Blocks with similar volumes will be removed from the updated maps and volume table, to keep volumes within the maximum of two times the HVS. At this time, the harvest volume tables and maps will be resubmitted. All other plan information will remain as per the original (December 1st) submission.

Volume Estimates (Planner Estimates)

Planner estimates of planned block volume may be used instead of inventory volumes where there is justification to do so. Indicator 13 in the FMP Annual Report will add planner estimates to the comparison of harvested volume/ha relative to yield curve estimates.

Volume Estimates (Retention)

Volumes in tables will be reduced by 9% to reflect retention being left. The tables will be submitted in excel format to facilitate analysis by the Ministry.

Volume by Species (FOPS section 1-3 (1)(ii)(C))

Instead of summarizing total volume planned by species, the planned harvest area will be summarized by the planning units and species groupings used in the FMP.

Planned Road Reclamation (FOPS 1-6 (c) (vii))

Planned reclamation for class 4 roads will not be displayed on plan submission maps, and the strategy to reclaim Class 4 roads within 2 years is described in this operating plan document. Any class 4 roads not being reclaimed within 2 years will either be identified on maps or in a table as agreed upon with the area forester. Approval is required to leave Class 4 roads open beyond the 2 years or to reclaim them in a manner not consistent with the standard.

It is proposed that a table of the class 4 roads not being reclaimed within 2 years be submitted with the March 15, 2021 revision of this operating plan, with a request for approval to exceed the 2 year timeframe.

Stakeholder Engagement (FOPS 1-3 (1) (c))

The alternative solution proposed by the forest industry subcommittee on October 15, 2020 for making stakeholder engagement information available to the Forest Service was not accepted. The alternative solution approved in previous years has therefore been used for this Operating Plan.

Area write-ups at the operating area level are provided that have a stakeholder section summarizing the engagement done and the outcomes at the block level if applicable. The write-ups address areas

where stakeholders indicated they have no concerns with the entire area and identify circumstances where no stakeholder engaged the shareholders (e.g. no one responded to letters or advertisements). For blocks where concerns were raised any commitments made are identified in the write-up.

2.3 Variances from FMA and HVS

This operating plan is aligned with provisions in the PA FMA and the approved HVS. Specifically,

- FMA Section 10.2 – Operating Plan is being complied with
- Consultation with third party operators and the integration of shareholder and third party operations is occurring where feasible as outlined under *FMA Article 6 – Third Party Operators*, and
- Planned area at 2 times volume is consistent with the shareholder allocations outlined in *FMA Schedule F* and the HVS in the approved FMP.

3 Engagement and Information Sharing

The FMA area supports the activities of many forest users who contribute to the economic and social sustainability of at least 30 communities in and around the FMA area. Year-round residents of these communities benefit from the income generated by timber production, special forest products gathering, tourism, trapping, outfitting, commercial fishing, and wild rice production. The forest is also an important source of recreation, food, and cultural identity associated with the traditional pursuits of hunting, fishing and gathering. Local populations as well as visitors from other parts of the province participate in outdoor recreation that includes sport hunting and fishing, cottage visits, camping, picnicking, swimming, wildlife viewing, and snowmobiling. Nearly all this activity is concentrated on road-accessible portions of the FMA area.

These land users and members of the public have an interest in the forest management activities being planned for the PA FMA area, and engagement with them is a continuous process aimed at developing mutually acceptable operating plans and activities. Communication and information sharing mechanisms are continually being modified and adjusted to meet people's needs and expectations, and legal requirements. The goal is to reach interested people and communities in whatever manner is most effective.

Engagement and information sharing activities that occurred during the development of this operating plan are outlined below. A general description of the type of adjustments that are made to draft plans to address interests and issues is also provided.

3.1 Activities Undertaken

In preparing this operating plan Sakaw shareholders contacted, met with and incorporated feedback from rural and urban municipalities, First Nations and Métis communities and individuals, cabin owners, trappers, outfitters, other forest industry operators, municipalities, politicians, business owners, and other interested people.

3.1.1 Changes Due to COVID-19

For everyone's safety instead of holding public meetings in the fall of 2020, maps showing proposed harvest areas were made available online and a variety of ways to meet with planners to discuss them were offered.

The options offered were:

- a one-on-one phone call or online meeting (for viewing a map together)
- an online meeting with a small group
- a small field tour with the following restrictions:
 - maximum of 10 people, including the Sakaw shareholder representative
 - everyone takes their own vehicle
 - keep at least 2 meters space between people
 - mandatory masks and hand sanitizing
 - no food/beverages supplied or shared (participants can bring what they would like for their personal consumption only)

3.1.2 Online Maps

Draft operating plan maps were posted on the Sakaw website (www.sakaw.ca) on October 23, 2020. The maps showed roads and harvest blocks proposed for Year 1 of the plan in detail, and more generally for Years 2-5.

Links on the “What’s New” section of the home page led to the draft maps, and instructions on how to give feedback.

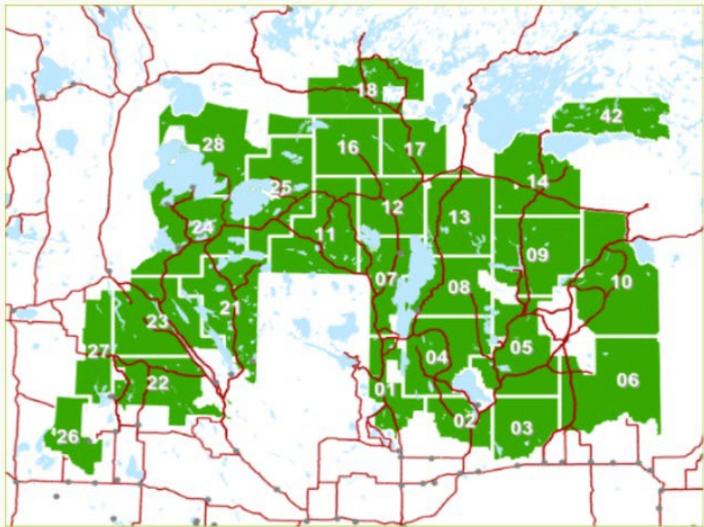
The instructions provided were the same as those in the letter mailed and emailed to contacts for the PA FMA area (discussed in the section below). People were asked to review the maps for their area and email Sakaw (admin@sakaw.ca) indicating any area they wanted to discuss, so they could then be contacted by the appropriate person.

What's New...

2021 Operating Plan Planning Maps are now available in PDF format

[See the 2021 Draft Maps Here >>](#)

[How to give Feedback >>](#)



2021 Operating Plan Draft Planning Maps (Oct 2020):

To view operating planning maps in pdf. format, click on the links below.

NOTE: These are large map files and may load slowly.

- [Unit 01](#)
- [Unit 02](#)
- [Unit 03](#)
- [Unit 04](#)
- [Unit 05](#)
- [Unit 06](#)
- [Unit 07](#)
- [Unit 08](#)
- [Unit 09](#)
- [Unit 10](#)
- [Unit 11](#)
- [Unit 12](#)
- [Unit 13](#)
- [Unit 14](#)
- [Unit 16](#)
- [Unit 17](#)
- [Unit 18](#)
- [Unit 21 \(1 of 2\) and \(2 of 2\)](#)
- [Unit 22](#)
- [Unit 23 \(1 of 2\) and \(2 of 2\)](#)
- [Unit 24 \(1 of 2\) and \(2 of 2\)](#)
- [Unit 25](#)
- [Unit 26](#)
- [Unit 27](#)
- [Unit 28](#)
- [Unit 42](#)

3.1.3 Letters and Emails

Also on October 23, 2020 letters and emails were sent to over 1,000 contacts for the PA FMA area, directing them to the Sakaw web site for viewing the draft maps. The contacts included people and organizations from a database kept by Sakaw, as well as government lists of disposition holders and registered trappers in the FMA area.

The letters also provided information about work starting on FMP amendment #2 to adapt the FMP to the woodland caribou range plan that overlaps with most of the PA FMA area.

Information about the opportunity to review draft forestry plans reached all areas within and adjacent to the PA FMA area through these mailings, including the indigenous communities for which the province’s duty to consult is triggered by this proposed project.

3.1.4 Advertising

The general public was also reached through increased advertising efforts. Information about the opportunity to review draft forestry plans was spread through radio ads, newspapers, online news sites, community bulletin boards, posters, and the Sakaw website.

All advertisements directed people to Sakaw's website for information and instructions for viewing and providing input on the draft operating plan maps.

Radio

Radio ads ran on:

- CKBI Radio (900 CKBI), for 10 days, 5 spots a day. CKBI is based in Prince Albert and heard over south central Canada.
- Green Lake Radio (CNGL94.5), for 5 days, 3 spots/day.

The ads were:

Sakâw Askiy holds the forest management license for the Prince Albert Forest Management Agreement area. Shareholders who harvest wood from the area are: A.C. Forestry, Carrier Forest Products, Edgewood Forest Products, Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp, Montreal Lake Business Ventures, Norsask Forest Products, and Tolko Meadow Lake OSB.

This year, instead of holding public information sessions, Sakaw is offering other ways for you to meet with planners to discuss the draft forest operating plan for 2021.

To find out more, visit online at Sakaw.ca.

Newspapers

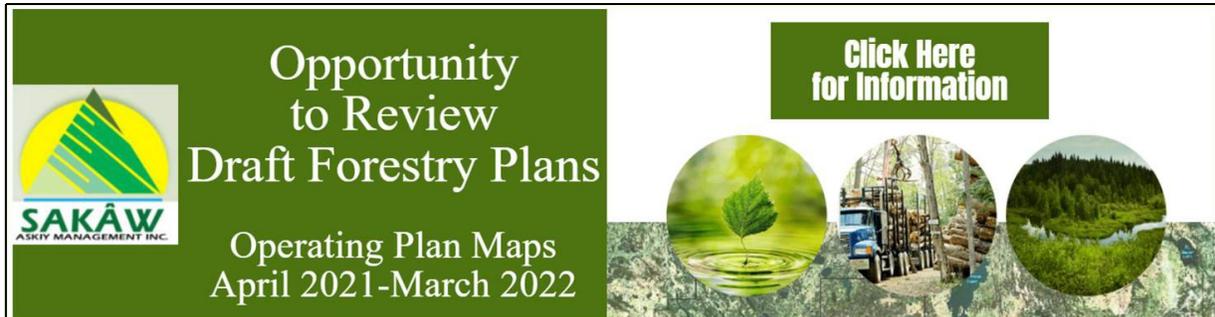
The Shellbrook Chronicle and Spiritwood Herald weekly papers, which are being combined during COVID-19, ran the following ad in the October 15, 2020 edition:



The advertisement is a rectangular box with a green border. At the top left is the Sakaw logo, which consists of a stylized green and yellow tree icon above the word "SAKAW" in bold green letters. To the right of the logo, the address "219 - 1061 Central Ave. Prince Albert, SK S6V 4V4" and phone number "Phone: (306) 953-2021" are listed in a small black font. Below the logo and address, the main heading "Opportunity to Review Draft Forestry Plans" is written in a large, bold, green font. Underneath the heading, there are two paragraphs of text in a smaller black font. The first paragraph states that Sakaw Askiy hold the forest management license for the Prince Albert Forest Management Agreement area and lists the shareholders: A.C. Forestry, Carrier Forest Products, Edgewood Forest Products, Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp, Montreal Lake Business Ventures, Norsask Forest Products, and Tolko Meadow Lake OSB. The second paragraph says that instead of holding public information sessions, Sakaw is offering other ways for you to meet with planners to discuss the draft forest operating plan for 2021. At the bottom of the ad, it says "To find out more, visit online at www.sakaw.ca".

Online News Sites

The news pages on paNOW, MeadowlakeNOW, LaRongeNOW, and BattlefordsNOW ran the following ad for 2 weeks:



Online Community Bulletin Boards

The community events/news pages of paNOW, MeadowlakeNOW, LaRongeNOW, and BattlefordsNOW ran the following information:

Opportunity to Review Draft Forestry Plans

Oct 14, 2020 10:49 AM

Sakaw Askiy is preparing the Forest Operating Plan for the Prince Albert Forest Management Agreement area for the next 5-year period.

For everyone's safety, instead of holding public meetings this year we are offering other ways to discuss draft maps of harvest areas, or the 20-year Forest Management Plan for the entire landscape.

Please view draft Operating Plan maps for next year (April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022) to see if harvesting is planned in an area of interest for you. Click on the link in the "What's New" section at www.sakaw.ca

If you would like to discuss the planned harvesting or the long-term Forest Management Plan for the entire forest area, email admin@sakaw.ca as soon as possible. The Operating Plan will be finalized in November for submission on December 1, 2020.

Article continues below ad

Posters

A one-page poster was distributed to planners for putting up on bulletin boards around communities as appropriate.

3.1.5 Customized Maps for Trapping and Outfitting Areas

Outfitters and the Chairs of trapping furblocks were sent a customized map (or maps) at the end of November 2020 by registered mail, which showed the boundaries of their allocated furblock or outfitting area with the proposed harvest areas and major roads overlain on it. Unnecessary information that could detract from showing the planned activities in the area was removed from the maps. The accompanying letter asked the Chairs of trapping furblocks to make the maps available to their members and indicated that additional copies could be mailed upon request.

3.2 Adjustments to Plans

Plans and maps were revised to incorporate the input received from other land users to the best extent possible. Changes to the draft plans included but were not limited to retaining high value trapping habitat within harvest areas, maintaining traditional access to areas, adjusting harvest areas or the timing of harvest, and leaving green tree retention in specific locations (such as high value habitat, sensitive sites, or to protect trails).

Some of the adjustments made are general and aspatial in nature, such as shutting down the wood haul trucks for a long weekend or not burning slash piles during deer hunt season. Others were specific to a location that could be shown on a map, such as leaving an unharvested buffer around a cabin, leaving a visual buffer around a lake, or moving the location of a road.

This operating plan is a living document informed by on-going discussions with stakeholders and First Nations and Métis people. While input into the development of this plan is complete, if new information becomes available during the life of the plan which needs to be considered during operational activities, Sakaw shareholders will submit requests to amend the plan as appropriate.

Some examples where groups expressed common concerns with proposed harvesting plans for 2020-21 were:

Whiteswan Lake. Members of Whelan Bay Cottage Owners Association are facing high water levels in Whiteswan Lake that are flooding beaches and threatening cottages, and are concerned about the impact any harvesting in the Whiteswan watershed on could have on increasing water run-off into the lake. High water levels in the lake have been an ongoing issue for several years now. Adjustments made to the proposed operating plan for 2020/21 were:

- Disturbance in the watershed from harvesting and fire is being kept to under 20%, in line with the results of an environmental impact assessment done for the 2000 FMP for the PA FMA area, which concluded that “No additional mitigation measures were recommended for harvest plans not exceeding 20% of a watershed greater than 3,000 ha in size.”
- An extra wide riparian buffer of 150 m is being left around the entire lake.
- Maps of the area now show the increased size of the lake due to higher water levels, based on recent satellite imagery of the area.

Christopher Lake and Fish Lake Métis Traditional Areas. Dog mushers, a local family, and the Fish Lake Métis Local 108 gathered to express concerns about harvesting along Hwy 2 near Christopher Lake and by Birchbark Lake. The area along Hwy 2 is a high use area for many people and one of the last big areas where mushers live and carry out traditional dog sledding activities. The area by Birchbark Lake is in an area traditionally used by the Fish Lake Métis, and an important area for elk hunting.

Adjustments made to the proposed operating plan for 2020/21 were:

- The majority of concerns that were brought up were regarding proposed Year 2 harvest blocks. The concerns brought forth will be considered in future operating plans. A suggestion about accessing the harvest areas and hauling the wood out to the north using a cleared cutline and/or the Beaton trail (rather than accessing the areas from Hwy 2) is being considered, along with how the areas could be harvested in a way that would protect the existing trails.
- An online meeting was held to discuss comments and concerns brought up by Fish Lake Métis Local (FLML) regarding harvesting around Birchbark Lake. The concerns were generally related to elk habitat protection and access management. Planners provided information on elk habitat management and made suggestions on how to minimize 'road hunters' with various access management strategies. Although Fish Lake Métis Local seemed in favor of the suggestions, they indicated that they would like a government biologist to provide comments on the operating plan as it relates to elk habitat.

Nesslin Lake / Ness Creek. Local groups with an interest in tourism formed the Big River Recreation and Conservation Area Committee and are requesting a moratorium on logging in the area. The group submitted a proposal to government for a protected area with land uses that would include selective logging and expanded tourism activities. There are also concerns about high water levels in Nesslin Lake and the impact any harvesting in the watershed could have on increasing those levels. Harvesting in this area has already been delayed for several years while work is underway to address concerns and interests. A summary of the work done to date to address concerns is found in Appendix B, and some highlights are:

- A 'cut and leave' harvest pattern is proposed for this area, where large areas and corridors are left unharvested beside the harvest areas, rather than an event-style harvest design. However an event style design is preferred for environmental, forest health, and wildlife reasons.
- Numerous harvest areas have been removed from the plan, and many harvest areas within the Nesslin Lake watershed were moved to future years. There are currently no blocks within the Nesslin Lake watershed that are proposed as Year 1 of this Operating Plan submission, and very little area within the entire five years of the operating plan.
- Visual impacts in any well used areas important to local people or tourism and recreational activities have been mitigated by inserting buffer zones and removing planned harvest areas.
- The main route for hauling wood was modified, and a commitment to not harvest until after the September long weekend has been made.
- Only one harvest area is planned within the watershed for this lake, for at least 2 years into the future. The area of the watershed represented by this harvest area is around 0.5% of the watershed.

Chitek Lake. The Mayor and Council of the Resort Village of Chitek Lake raised concerns about the amount of harvesting planned for the Chitek Lake area and the negative impact on tourism, recreation, and activities of local residents. Questions about the effects of harvesting on ecosystems were also raised.

- Various ways of ensuring that there is room for all land use activities, and that the area remains attractive from a tourism perspective have been discussed. Those discussion will continue with the Mayor and Council.

- The Mayor and Council are considering an invitation to appoint a representative and alternate to be a member of the Public Advisory Group for the PA FMA area.
- The main concern from this group is utilization of the trail networks around Chitek for tourism. These trails have been mapped and are shown on operating plan maps as stakeholder trails and/or numbered skidoo trails. Trails will be usable post harvest, and during harvest wherever possible to minimize any impact.

3.3 First Nation and Métis Communities

The Saskatchewan government has a duty to consult with First Nations and Métis communities about the impact of this operating plan on their ability to exercise Treaty and Aboriginal rights, before approving the plan. The people Sakaw solicited input from on the drafts of this plan included the First Nations and Métis community leaders in and adjacent to the PA FMA area.

Feedback received has enabled Sakaw to adjust the plan to avoid, mitigate or minimize adverse impacts on the ability of indigenous communities and individuals to hunt, fish and trap for food on unoccupied Crown lands, gather plants for food and medicine, and carry out traditional ceremonial and cultural practices.

Information about Sakaw’s engagement efforts and adjustments made to harvesting plans during the development of this operating plan, is provided to the Government of Saskatchewan with the submission of this operating plan. This includes information about the First Nations and Métis communities contacted and subsequent discussions, that help inform the government’s consultation process. Indigenous communities and organizations in and adjacent to the PA FMA area are:

First Nation Communities

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Ahtahkakoop First Nation | Montreal Lake First Nation | Sturgeon Lake First Nation |
| Big River First Nation | Muskoday First Nation | Wahpeton Dakota First Nation |
| James Smith Cree First Nation | Pelican Lake First Nation | Witchehan Lake First Nation |
| Lac La Ronge Indian Band | Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation | |

Métis Organizations

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Nipawin (#134) | Dore/Sled Lake (#67) | Fish Lake (#108) |
| La Ronge (#19) | Leoville (#64) | Debden (#61) |
| Weyakwin (#16) | Chitek Lake (#97) | Timberland (#121) |
| Timber Bay (#20) | Spiritwood (#136) | Big River (#59) |
| Beauval Sipishik (#37) | Prince Albert (#7) | Shell Lake (#81) |
| Green Lake (#5) | | |

There is also ongoing engagement with individual trappers and trapper associations, Chief and Council, committees or boards and band members throughout the year, that continues to be effective in avoiding or minimizing adverse impacts on traditional land uses.

Potential impacts from the proposed forest operations (harvesting, constructing, maintaining and reclaiming roads, and renewing the forest) on the ability to hunt, trap, fish and carry out traditional uses, and steps that are taken to avoid negative impacts, are described below.

- The harvest disturbance impacts the availability of vegetation for different wildlife species. The forest growth cycle is reset to the beginning, and a young forest starts to grow back.

Measures to mitigate the impact on trapping activity include keeping high value trapping habitat within and between proposed cutblocks, maintaining traditional access to trails and cabins used for trapping, adjusting harvest areas or the timing of harvest, and leaving green tree retention in strategic locations such as valuable habitat or sensitive sites.

- Building roads and carrying out some types of mechanical treatments to promote forest renewal can impact archaeological or culturally significant sites.

Forest planners work with communities and individuals to identify and avoid the location of such sites during development of the operating plan. Once approved, the operating plan is also submitted to Saskatchewan's Heritage Conservation Branch (HCB) for screening. Areas of moderate or high heritage potential where activities will exceed minimum ground disturbance levels are surveyed by an archaeologist. If heritage resources are found adjustments are made to planned activities to avoid disturbing the site.

- Constructing, maintaining and reclaiming watercourse crossings can affect fish populations and water quality, and restrict the passage of water and fish.

Federal and provincial permits stipulate requirements that protect water and aquatic habitat when constructing water crossing. These include controlling erosion and sedimentation, storing fuels away from the water, inspecting crossings twice a year (spring and fall), and carrying out maintenance and prevention work. Crossings are removed when they are no longer needed, and the sites are restored.

Some examples of the engagement done, and changes made as a result of feedback received during the development of this operating plan are:

- The planned location of the Junor Cut-Across Road was changed to address access concerns and retention of moose habitat from discussions with Pelican First Nations. As a result of this change, the planned infrastructure within the Barnes Lake and Idyllwild Creek Operating Areas was substantially redesigned.
- During a field visit with a Lac La Ronge Indian Band Councilor from Hall Lake, a chanterelle mushroom patch was located and surveyed with a drone to determine the extent of it. An agreement was made to protect the patch with a no harvest zone of approximately 20 ha. The location of the mushroom patch as well as some previously unknown cabins identified by the Councilor were tagged in Sakaw's forest information (GIS) system. This was a commitment made for the 2020/21 operating plan. This area has not been harvested yet, and the commitment still stands.
- Unit 14, 16, 17, and 18 maps were reviewed online with the Traditional Lands and Resources Committee of the Lac LaRonge Indian Band. These 4 unit maps were also mailed out to both a Councilor and the committee's Coordinator to facilitate discussions with other forest users like trappers, gatherers, and hunters. Trappers of the N5 Furblock reviewed the maps at a fall meeting and are picking up another set of maps to review again at a potential spring meeting (provided a meeting can be held safely) .
- A member of Chitek Lake Métis Local #97 who had reviewed the draft maps on the Sakaw website requested paper maps to review with fellow members of Local #97. A package of 1:50,000 scale maps (Unit 26, 27, and 22) was sent to him as requested.
- Word of mouth was used to help spread information about the opportunity to review draft forestry plans in the community of Montreal Lake. The village was closed to visitors to prevent the spread of

- COVID-19, but paper copies of the map were delivered to the road checkpoint. Key people with ties to the trapping community were asked to help let trappers know and were provided with posters to put up on community bulletin boards.

3.4 Further Details (in Appendix B)

Discussions and Commitments

The PA FMA area is a large landscape that encompasses roughly 3.3 million hectares. Information from the many conversations about forestry operations and their impacts, including commitments and adjustments made, is entered into a stakeholder database on an ongoing basis. Detailed information exported from that database is found in Appendix B, as follows:

- Communications and commitments made from January 2015 to December 2020 is provided in an excel format that can be sorted or filtered and searched by name, operating area, keyword etc. (*Commitment_Communication_Masterlist.xls*).
- A report on communications from April to December 2020, when the 2021-22 Operating Plan was being developed, is provided in .pdf format. (*CommunicationsWithCommitmentsReport_April 2020_Nov 2020.pdf*).
- A list of contacts for the PA FMA area is provided in excel format. (*tblSakawStakeholders Query-November 2020.xls*).
- A summary of the issues and how they are being addressed in the Nesslin Lake area. (*Nesslin Lake Information Summary_October 2020.pdf*).

Outreach for the 2021-2026 Operating Plan

Appendix B also contains copies of:

- the letter sent to all contacts about the opportunity to review draft plans (*Letter_Engagement Opportunities.pdf*).
- the follow-up letter that accompanied customized maps sent to the Chairs of trapping furblocks and licensed outfitters (*Letter_Cutomized Maps_Furblock & Outfitting Areas.pdf*).
- the poster that was available for putting up on bulletin boards in communities (*Poster_Engagement Opportunities.pdf*).

4 Proposed Forest Operations

The operational activities that will be carried out under this operating plan involve:

- Forest harvesting (including felling, skidding, processing, log hauling, and storing and staging of wood)
- Road construction, maintenance, and reclamation
- Forest renewal

4.1 General

4.1.1 Operations Standards

Activities carried out under this operating plan and described below will follow requirements outlined in the Forest Operations Standard (July 8, 2020).

4.1.2 Contractor Management

Harvesting, road construction and maintenance, and renewal activities are carried out by independent contractors. Contractors must meet all operational and safety and health standards that apply to the operation they are responsible for. This includes:

- Providing direct supervision of their employees
- Ensuring safe working conditions for employees
- Adhering to each Shareholder's Environmental Policy, Environmental Management System, and forest practices certification requirements, as applicable
- Meeting the requirements of all applicable Saskatchewan Acts and Regulations
- Being familiar with Sakâw's forest management objectives and carrying out operations in a manner that is consistent with them
- Ensuring that employees comply with all forest regulations and contract provisions
- Working with the public, stakeholders and other users of the forest who may have leases, cabins, trails or other interests that need protecting within the operating area.

4.1.3 Harvest Block Boundaries

The boundaries of harvest areas will be marked with flagging tape, or the GPS coordinates of the boundary will be uploaded into the harvesting equipment, or a combination of both techniques will be used.

If boundaries are being ribboned, ribbons are not needed where a distinguishable linear corridor can be used, or the area beside the boundary has a height difference of 10 meters or more. Table 1 lists the standard flagging tape colours that will be used where needed, to mark boundaries or lines for proposed forestry activities. Deviations from the approved harvest area boundaries are acceptable under certain conditions and allowances set out in the Forest Operations Standard.

Table 1 Standard Flagging Tape Colours

| Ribbon Colour | Use |
|---|---|
| Pink "Harvest Area Boundary" | Harvest area boundary locations and sensitive sites where harvesting will not occur |
| Orange "Road Line" or "Road Centerline" | Road location |
| Day-glo Green "Machine Free Zone" (Carrier uses Yellow "Machine Free Zone") | Areas where equipment is not permitted to travel |
| Yellow "Special Management Zone" | Areas with special management conditions (i.e. no harvest zones in riparian management areas) |
| Yellow | Planting boundaries |

4.1.4 Temporary Work Camps

Requirements in a Temporary Work Camp Standard (dated July 8, 2020) will be followed whenever camps are set up for carrying out forestry activities in the 2021-2022 operating year. This includes black and grey water collection and disposal requirements that come into full effect on April 1, 2021.

The camp locations of contractors carrying out harvesting work will be kept updated in the reporting spreadsheet that is made available to the Ministry of Environment Forest Ecosystem Protection Specialists on an ongoing basis.

The camp locations of contractors carrying out renewal work will be emailed to the Area Forester by the responsible Shareholder.

4.1.5 Heritage Resource Surveys

Maps and operating information will be provided to the Heritage Conservation Branch (HCB) of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, for all areas included in Year 1 of this operating plan. HCB screens all proposed harvest areas and roads for heritage resource potential based on location, topography, known heritage resource information and professional judgement. Each site is rated for heritage potential. A qualified professional archaeologist is contracted to carry out field surveys on sites where the heritage potential is moderate or high and the roads or renewal methods involved are expected to exceed specified minimums for ground disturbance. If heritage resources are found during the survey, planned forestry activities are modified to avoid disturbing the sites.

In addition to the HCB annual review, sites of archaeological or cultural significance may be identified during the operating plan engagement process or during forestry activities. They will be reported to the HCB in accordance with provincial requirements and appropriate management actions identified.

4.2 Harvesting

4.2.1 Harvesting Methods

Mechanical harvesting systems are used to process all wood harvested on the FMA landbase. Typically, a mechanical system consists of a tracked feller-buncher used to cut standing trees and lay them in orderly piles (drags). A grapple-skidder collects the drags of wood left distributed throughout the harvested area by the feller-buncher and skids them to roadside or into rows within the cut block

to facilitate the use of a processor to remove tree branches and tops. The processor operator sorts the processed logs into three basic products: sawlogs, softwood pulp and hardwood.

There are also operations where timber is felled, processed at the stump, and forwarded to roadside.

4.2.2 Utilization Standards

The utilization standards approved in the 2018- 2038 Forest Management Plan, shown in Table 2, will be followed in this plan.

Table Utilization Standards in 2018-2038 FMP

| Product | Fibre Leaves forest | Stump Height (cm) | Minimum Top Diameter inside Bark (cm) | Minimum Merchantable Height (m) | Log Length (m) |
|------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| SWD Sawlog | CTL | 30 | 10 | 5.35 | 2.6 |
| SWD Pulp | Tree length | 30 | 8 | 5.35 | 2.4 |
| Hardwood | Tree length | 30 | 8 | 5.35 | Full tree |

4.2.3 Proposed Year 1 Harvest Volumes and Attributes

This operating plan includes the Year 1 harvest volumes shown in Table 2. The volumes shown are 2 times the annual allowable harvest, which includes contingency harvest areas. This provides flexibility to move harvest locations since weather, markets, wildfires, contractor and equipment availability, stakeholder concerns etc. change even the best laid plans. Despite this additional volume being included in the plan, harvesting will not exceed the HVS over a five-year cut control cycle so there is no risk of unsustainable harvest.

Table 2 Shareholder Allocations and Proposed Harvest Volumes

| Shareholders | Allocation (m ³ /yr) | Year 1 Proposed Volume (m ³) | Years of HVS Proposed |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| <u>Hardwood</u> | | | |
| A.C. Forestry | 200,000 | 381,537 | 1.9 |
| MLBV | 40,000 | 81,513 | 2.0 |
| MLMP | 95,000 | 190,002 | 2.0 |
| Tolko | 600,000 | 1,286,579 | 2.1 |
| <u>Softwood</u> | | | |
| A.C. Forestry | 200,000 | 413,630 | 2.1 |
| Carrier | 375,000 | 745,953 | 2.0 |
| Dunkley / Edgewood | 75,000 | 96,035 | 1.3 |
| MLBV | 200,000 | 370,643 | 1.9 |
| NorSask* | 250,000 | 477,584 | 1.9 |
| Total | 2,035,000 | 4,061,538 | 2.0 |

**Includes the former L & M allocation*

For greater certainty, nothing in this Operating Plan shall obligate Sakâw or any of its shareholders to harvest any minimum volume of timber, and it is recognized that operational flexibility is needed to address factors such as changing market conditions, stakeholder (including shareholder) issues, and other operational factors from time to time.

Appendix C contains a complete list of proposed harvest areas and their attributes (which includes the shareholder with harvesting responsibility for each block), submission maps, and unit volume summaries.

Writeups have been provided in Appendix C for each operating area describing stakeholder concerns and how they were addressed, and any specific prescriptions or strategies made in light of wildlife, forest health or other considerations.

4.2.4 Staging and Storage of Wood

As part of the harvesting process shareholders may stage or store wood before delivering it to the mills. Staging wood is when it is left at roadside in the block it was harvested in and not hauled until the next operating year. Storing wood is when it is moved out of a harvest block to a storage site before it is hauled to a mill.

Staging and storing wood is a critical strategy for managing wood moisture content in some shareholder mills. Sakâw shareholders store wood at locations along all-weather roads where they can access it when they need to deliver it to mills or get wood out of harvested areas so the roads can be reclaimed, and the area reforested.

Sakâw requests approval for the 2021-2022 operating year to:

- Exceed the 90-day time frame and allow all forest products to be removed from the harvest area anytime throughout the operating year until March 31, 2022 under Section 39(1) of the Forest Resources Management Regulations, and
- Leave wood in the staging areas and storage sites listed in Appendix C beyond March 31, 2022, until March 31, 2023.

These lists will be amended in January 2022 as the locations needed to store wood in the forest beyond the end of the operating year becomes clearer.

4.2.5 Silviculture Systems and Stand Level Retention

The primary silviculture system used is to cluster the harvest in an area and carry it out relatively quickly, so the area can be reclaimed and the time over which it is impacted is minimized. An average of 9% or more of the area (a range of 3 – 15% by cutblock) is left uncut. Generally, this event style harvesting is preferred for environmental, forest health, and wildlife reasons. The rationale behind this approach can be found in Appendix D of the long-term Forest Management Plan for the PA FMA area.

Management to control dwarf mistletoe involves removing infected trees and overrides the requirement to leave any uncut areas.

4.2.6 Riparian Area Harvesting

Harvesting and silviculture activities in riparian areas will comply with requirements for riparian management areas in the Forest Operations Standard, which are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 Riparian Area Harvesting Standards

| Waterbody Type | Category | Riparian Prescription |
|---|----------|---|
| Large (>5 ha) Lakes, Rivers, Streams | 1 | 10m No Harvest/No Equipment zone, plus a 30m limited harvest zone (can be partially harvested) |
| High Slope (>15%) Areas on Small (<5 ha) Lakes or Ponds | 2 | Limited harvest zone to the top of the slope (max 40m) with no equipment in the first 10m adjacent to the waterbody. |
| Low Slope (<15%) Areas on Small (<5 ha) Lakes or Ponds | 3 | 10m limited harvest zone with no equipment allowed within this zone. |
| Intermittent Streams | 4 | Leave single of clumped leave trees adjacent to the stream and ensure no equipment enters the stream channel. Crossings can occur on frozen ground or with appropriate crossing structures. |
| Ephemeral Streams, Wetlands | 5 | Do not obstruct or impede surface or subsurface flow. |

4.2.7 Visually Sensitive Areas

Some harvest areas in this operating plan fall within visually sensitive areas that can be seen from communities, public recreation areas, major highways, and high value recreational-use lakes and rivers. Harvest strategies for those areas take into consideration aesthetic values and stakeholder concerns, which may include limiting the extent of disturbed forest, reducing the size of openings, using irregular block boundaries, or using retention to act as a visual screen.

4.2.8 Third-Party Operators

Independent third party operators collectively have rights to harvest 150,000 m³/year of softwood sawlogs and 12,000 m³/year of hardwood from the PA FMA area. Shareholders and third-party operators work together wherever possible to plan operations and integrate the location of harvest areas, use of roads, and utilization of products from the area.

4.3 Roads and Crossings

Shareholders are responsible for the construction and maintenance and reclamation of Improved Bush Roads (IBRs) and all other lower class roads used to access harvest operations.

The softwood and hardwood operators share responsibility for the roads and crossings in an area, as listed in the roads and crossings tables in Appendix D.

Watercourse crossings are constructed, maintained and reclaimed according to conditions specified in Aquatic Habitat Protection Permits (AHPPs). Sakâw requests that a blanket Aquatic Habitat Protection Permit be issued under *the Environmental Management and Protection Act* to authorize the construction, maintenance, and remediation of road crossings and the removal of beaver dams, at water crossings approved under this operation plan.

4.3.1 Proposed Roads and Watercourse Crossings

Proposed Year 1 road construction is summarized in Appendix D by operating area, zone, and the

licence area. Crossings are also listed in Appendix D, by location and type. The roads and crossings were planned for 2 times the harvest volume and exceed what is expected to be constructed.

4.3.2 Road Closures

Temporary and permanent road closures align with provincial resource protection methods (in addition to the requirements in the Forest Operations Standard). They are used to restrict vehicle access to help prevent overfishing or overhunting of an area, protect road and camp infrastructure, and reduce liability. Berms and gates proposed for installation in Year 1 are listed in Appendix D.

4.3.3 Road Deactivation

Deactivating roads involves removing watercourse crossings and leaving the road surface intact for future use. No major roads (Classes 1 or 2) are planned for deactivation in the 2021/22 operating year.

4.3.4 Road Reclamation

Roads no longer needed for forest management purposes are generally reclaimed and returned to productive status. Slash piles will be burned, and in-block Class 4 roads reclaimed within two years of harvest completion.

4.4 Renewal

4.4.1 Silviculture Ground Rules

Silviculture Ground Rules (SGRs) that outline the operational treatments that can be used for a given forest type (i.e., harvest, renewal and stand tending) are followed. These are found in the Forest Management Plan for the PA FMA area (April 1, 2018).

4.4.2 Planned Year 1 Renewal Activities

Tables that identify blocks planned for initial treatment (leave for natural, scarify or plant), retreatment, or that won't be retreated due to mitigating circumstances, are included in Appendix E along with maps of their locations. The renewal activities include areas harvested by third party operators on the FMA area and areas with outstanding silviculture obligations.

No herbicide or insecticide treatments are planned for the 2021-2022 operating year.

4.4.3 Regeneration Assessments

Regeneration assessments that will be done in 2021/22 involve:

- Establishment surveys on areas harvested in 2014/15, by shareholders or third party operators.
- Free to Grow (FTG) surveys on areas harvested in 2007/08, where Sakâw is responsible for legacy silviculture obligations as outlined in Schedule A of the PA FMA Assignment and Assumption Agreement.
- Blocks missed in previous years will be included with these surveys.

These surveys will primarily be carried out using a Large-Scale Aerial Photography Method, with interpreters assessing high resolution aerial photos in 3D. Ground surveys will also be carried to calibrate those assessments and to check the regeneration of some areas in the field.

5 Forest Protection

5.1 Fire Protection and Suppression

Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment is responsible for the prevention, detection and suppression of forest fires where identified values, including tracts of valuable timber, are at risk. The Wildfire Act and Regulations provide legislative requirements for industrial and commercial operators related to wildfire preparedness and response. Sakâw will submit a Fire Protection and Suppression Plan by March 31, 2021 to Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency. Each shareholder will ensure their operations comply with that plan and the requirements of the Wildfire Act.

5.2 Insect and Disease Protection

Protection strategies are outlined in the 2018 FMP (Section 7.2) and incorporated into planning and operations to minimize the loss of timber from forest insects and diseases.

Efforts to control the spread of jack pine dwarf mistletoe are focused on reducing the chance of current infestations becoming established in new regenerating stands. Strategies used include ensuring that retention (including in riparian areas) is made up of species not susceptible to mistletoe and sanitizing areas adjacent to the block.

Strategies that can be used to control building populations of sawyer beetles, protect in-block retention, and protect harvested timber from being degraded include:

- Sanitation. Burn slash piles as soon as possible to get rid of habitat for the beetles. Haul log piles out of the area as soon as possible. Avoid storing fresh cut logs close to fire-killed timber (in the forest or in the mill yard).
- Leave retention in large clumps (not single trees) so there is proportionately less edge and more protection for interior trees.

6 Reporting and Self-Inspections

The following reporting will be done during the implementation of this plan:

- Harvest Operations. A common report on shareholder harvest operations in the PA FMA area, in the form of a shared worksheet (“smartsheet”) that is continuously updated as changes happen, is made available to the Ministry of Environment Forest Ecosystem Protection Specialists (FEPS) on an ongoing basis. Alerts are automatically sent to the FEPS when a row in the report changes.
- Harvest Camp Location. A common list of harvest camp locations for all shareholders is also reported to the FEPS through a shared worksheet that can be checked at any time.
- Renewal Camp Location. The location of renewal camps (usually for tree planting) is emailed to the Area Forester by each shareholder.
- Crossings. A monthly crossings report outlining where active construction or maintenance work on crossings has occurred is emailed to the Area Forester by each shareholder.
- Monitoring and reporting on operational activities will summarize the area harvested, the areas of reforestation activities, and the amount of roads built and reclaimed. Activities are summarized and submitted annually once actual harvest data is available, under the Forest Data Submission Standard.

Sakâw Shareholders self-inspect their activities on the landbase as required under section 32(e) of the Forest Resources Management Regulations, terms of the Prince Albert FMA Side Agreement, and voluntary certification to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) standard. The following self-inspection and self-reporting procedures will be followed by Sakâw's Shareholders:

- Before operations begin a start-up checklist will be completed with the contractor. This pre-work form details specific requirements for the operation, such as how a harvest area will be developed and key standards to be met.
- A post-work inspection will be done and documented once operations are complete.
- Non-compliances will be reported by e-mail or letter to the appropriate FEPS as soon as practical after they are discovered and verified. The notice will contain the location and the specifics around the non-compliance as well as the action plan to be taken to correct the issue, if applicable.
- Measures to correct non-compliances will follow each Shareholder's non-compliance, preventative and corrective action process.
- Pre- and post-work reports will be made available to Forest Officers on request.

7 Amendments

Request for amendments to this operating plan will be submitted by email or letter to the Area Forester. Where a change being requested may impact stakeholders, engagement will normally be done before the request is submitted and information about the outcome of the discussions will be included with the amendment request. If that is not the case, the submission will indicate this.

Appendix A Variances from FMP

See files or folder titled:

Sakaw_Operating_Plan_Year 1-2021-Blocks containing OSD Areas Final.xlsx

Sakaw_Operating_Plan_Year 1-2021-Blocks inside Caribou Tier 1 Final

Sakaw_Operating_Plan_Year 1-2021-Roads inside Caribou Tier 1 Final

Sakaw_Operating_Plan_Year 1-2021-Blocks outside Tactical Plan Final.xlsx

Sakaw_Operating_Plan_Year 1-2021-Blocks-Profile Analysis Planning ZonesFinal.xlsx

Appendix B Engagement and Information Sharing

See files or folder titled:

Commitment_Communication_Masterlist.xlsx

CommunicationsWithCommitmentsReport_April_2020_Nov_2020.pdf

tblSakawStakeholders Query – November 2020.xlsx

Letter_Engagement Opportunities

Poster_Engagement Opportunities

Letter_Customized Maps_Furblocks & Outfitting Areas

Nesslin Lake Information Summary_October 2020

Appendix C Harvest Areas and Volumes

See files or folder titled:

Area Writeups 2021 (folder)

Submission Maps 2021 (folder)

- 15K_Submission_v2
- 50K_Submission_v2
- 300K_Submission_v2

Unit Volume Summaries 2021 (folder)

- Unit 01 – 28, 42 Volume Summary 2021 v2.pdf

Sakaw_Operating_Plan_Proposed_Harvest_Tables_Year 1-2021- to Year 5-2026 Detail_v2

Staging Areas 2021-22

Storage Sites 2021-22

Appendix D Roads, Watercourse Crossings, Closures

See files or folder titled:

Sakaw_Operating_Plan_Proposed_Crossing_Locations_2021_2026 Final.xlsx

Sakaw_Operating_Plan_Proposed_Road_Access_Control_GATES_BERMS_2021_2026.xlsx

Sakaw_Operating_Plan_Proposed_Road_Construction_2021_2026 Final.xlsx

Appendix E Renewal Activities

See files or folder titled:

50K_Renewal_Maps (folder) _v2

Sakaw_Ops_Plan_Proposed_Scarification_Tree_Planting_LFN_NSR_2021_2026_Final_v2